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BINGE

End of a Profligate Era

I.F. STONE

The United States, the world's number-one debtor nation, may be heading for history's biggest bankruptcy. If that occurs, it will drag the world down with it, whether capitalist or communist, developed or underdeveloped. Even a new bull market would not cure the basic disorders of the U.S. economy.

It is not just that something has to be done about the Federal deficit and the trade deficit. The whole country is in hock. One of the delusions of supply-side economics was that massive tax cuts would lead to a sharp rise in the volume of savings. But the savings rate—as a percentage of disposable income *after* taxes—has been cut by more than half during the Reagan years. It was 7.1 percent in 1980 and 4.3 percent in 1986. This year it has averaged 3 percent and is currently closer to 2 percent. That is a precipitous drop.

This is reflected in the biggest consumer binge of all time, based increasingly on credit. Since 1980, private debt, including installment credit, noninstallment debt and home mortgages, has almost doubled. It was a shade above $1.3 trillion in 1980.

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LETTERS.

LOADED LANGUAGE

Amherst, Mass.

It wasn't so long ago that *The Nation* printed a "Sovieticus" column by Stephen F. Cohen of Princeton University, referred to on the cover as "The American Media and the Soviet Union" [May 12, 1984]. It is time for *Nation* readers to reread it.

A case in point is a recent editorial, "The Jim Wright Shuffle" [Sept. 5], by Jefferson Morley, *The Nation*'s Washington bureau editor. One only has to substitute "Nicaragua" for "Soviet Union" in Cohen's article to see the bias and, worse, misinformation. Cohen's criticism of the U.S. media included use of "special political terms that are inherently biased and laden with double standards." *Nation* readers find Morley referring to the Sandinistas' governance of Nicaragua as a "regime," a term that Cohen specifically mentions.

The Sandinista Party was elected to head the government of Nicaragua two days before the Republican Party was again chosen to head ours. Yet Morley does not refer to the Reagan Administration as a "regime," though, God knows, a case could certainly be made for doing so.

This is a spillover, pure and simple, from the knee-jerk anti-Sovietism that became fashionable during the cold war to save liberals from being mistaken for leftists. It's time to knock it off.

Morley is guilty of yet another typical offense spelled out by Cohen, which is "the media's habit of creating a popular perception that the Soviet Union"—substitute Nicaragua—"is guilty of every charge made against it."

Morley claims that "the possibility of bilateral talks . . . depends on what measures of democratization the Sandinistas adopt in the coming months." Morley seems to be a victim, himself, of Administration propaganda. Has he been in Washington too long?

If we are to find our way home from the Central American quagmire, reporters must correctly inform us about the differences between the reality of Central America and the perception here of that reality. A point of view that is based on facts is one thing. But a point of view that is based on misinformation is quite another.

Again, Morley refers to more *contra* aid as "a morally offensive strategic blunder." *Contra* aid is more than immoral. It is illegal. It has been unconstitutional since day one. If Morley recognized this fact he would be calling—dare I hope?—for impeachment of Ronald Reagan et al., not because of their lack of morals but because of their crimes.

Mary L. Wentworth

FLAWED DESIGN

New York City

As author of *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, reviewed by Eliot Weinberger in the August 29 issue of *The Nation* ("Grand Designs"), I wish to correct the many errors of fact in his review:

§ As far as I have been able to determine, John Cage did not play his first silent music at Black Mountain.

§ It was under not Josef Albers but Charles Olson that the students lost their role in the administration of the college.

§ It was John Rice, not Albers, who had many doubts about the farm. Albers was one of its strongest supporters.

§ The term "ashtray art" referred not to ceramics in particular but to the general catch-all crafts course in which a little pottery, a little weaving, a little woodworking, etc., were taught with no constructive understanding of the craft itself. Albers did oppose the teaching of ceramics to beginning students in the crafts. He felt that clay had been miserably abused because it offered so little resistance and was so easily made to imitate other materials.

§ Albers was not relentlessly apolitical; he was relentlessly anticommunist. He did not object to the teaching of history or social science.

§ Students and faculty were not oblivious to "dramatic contemporary events." Numerous letters were sent to political leaders voicing an opinion on events, including one on the Spanish Civil War (this letter is not mentioned in the book). Two Spanish brothers who had barely escaped with their lives were accepted into the student body (one died young, of the tuberculosis he contracted in the war). Many of the faculty and students left the college to join the war effort, and at least three lost their lives. The acceptance of the refugees as faculty and students was itself a political statement.

§ Albers stormed out of an Irwin Shaw play? That is not in my book.

§ There was a craving during the war for news, and constant debate and controversy over its significance.

§ It was not Albers, in particular, who opposed the plan for a program in conjunction with the local community. There were those in groups other than the Albers circle who were more strongly opposed. Albers was on sabbatical during most of the debate.

§ There was a limit set on the percentage of Jews who would be admitted during the late 1930s, when the college's reputation for accepting refugees led to an influx of requests. I have no reason to believe that it lasted beyond that early period. I also have not been able to determine what the percentage was, though from what I can tell, it was generally ignored.

§ Albers did not "[keep] Black Mountain segregated." There was no "overwhelming opposition" to segregation at the college until 1943-44. It was briefly a topic of discussion during the 1930s. The decision to segregate [*sic*] was certainly controversial in the community and courageous.

§ It was not "one Albersian" who referred to the Cage happening as "the Dark Ages"; it was Johanna Jalowetz, and she was her own person. The happening took place in 1952; Albers left in 1949.

Mary Emma Harris

WEINBERGER REPLIES

New York City

Mary Emma Harris's extremely interesting book suffers from two drawbacks, both evident in her letter: a heaping up of minutiae at the expense of general patterns or conclusions and a refusal to recognize some of the less appealing aspects of Black Mountain College.

A point-by-point refutation of Harris's letter is possible, but it would be of interest to nearly no one. Take the last "error." The late Johanna Jalowetz is unknown outside of Black Mountain and does not appear in my article. A reviewer cannot afford to spend a few sentences identifying a minor character in order to introduce a three-word remark. I referred to her as "one Albersian" because she sided with Albers in nearly all of the controversies, and her response to the Cage happening seemed consistent with the Albers aesthetic—an aesthetic that existed whether or not Albers himself was actually present (and I never said he was).

Much of the information in my review was drawn from Martin Duberman's *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community*, which I credited. Readers interested in Albers's opinions on politics, the farm, student participation, ceramics, history, the social sciences, community programs and Shaw (Irwin, not George Bernard) should find a copy of the Duberman book, unfortunately long out of print.

To take the four more general points:

§ I wrote that "neither Harris nor Duberman mentions any interest there in the Spanish Civil War," which is true—and both are long books. Harris counters that the students did indeed send one letter to somebody, which is not mentioned in her book. Well, O.K. By "war effort" she is apparently changing the subject to World War II. Of course many students and faculty joined up, but I was discussing those who remained at the college. And one of them, as I wrote, did get into trouble for bringing a radio into the dining hall to listen to the news. The main issue is that, under Albers, every politically active faculty member was fired or forced out, and most of the like-minded students left.

§ Harris's book has one—only one—sentence about the quota for Jews: "In fact, in the 1930s and early 1940s, as an increasingly large number of Jewish faculty and

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EDITORIALS.

Binge

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

The latest 1987 estimate is almost $2.5 trillion. Every American seems to have acquired not just one but several credit cards. With all that funny money, who needs counterfeiters anymore?

The public debt in the Reagan era rose even faster than the private did. It more than doubled. The Federal debt went from $742.8 billion in 1980 to $1.87 trillion at the end of the second quarter of 1987. State and local debt rose from $295.3 billion to $533.1 billion. Total government debt is now almost $2.5 trillion, only a shade behind the private. Together they add up to almost $5 trillion. The Reagan Administration, while preaching the old-fashioned virtues, has inspired an era of unprecedented profligacy.

The trade deficit is another of its aspects. That deficit was $31.4 billion in 1980. The latest estimate, on the basis of the first eight months of this year, is $170.3 billion. It is growing although the dollar has lost 40 percent of its value in the past twenty-two months, a de facto devaluation that was supposed to make U.S. products competitive again. All this helps explain the hysteria on the stock market and why yields on long-term government bonds are in the double digits again.

The bill collector is at the door. But political leadership is reluctant to answer the bell. The early warning was sounded by George Bush in the 1980 Republican nominating campaign before his eyes were clouded by the vice presidency. He had said we couldn't have a stepped-up arms race, a tax

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cut *and* a balanced budget. We are suffering the consequences of this "voodoo economics." But he is now advocating what he once denounced, saying no, just like Reagan, to any tax increase or defense cut. His only concrete contribution to the economic debate is a proposal to cut capital gains taxes, a supply-side snake oil that would add to the deficit in order to refuel speculation. This is like trying to stem drug addiction by cutting the price of narcotics.

The United States needs a dose of austerity as surely as do Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. But the International Monetary Fund does not dare scold us as it does them. Nor do we hear any clear voice from the Democratic candidates. They remember too well what happened to Mondale when he dared utter the dirty word "taxes" in 1984. Already Treasury Secretary Baker is suggesting that the stock market had started to crash because Democrats in Congress had proposed a few nickel-and-dime additions to corporate levies and a curb on takeovers. Reagan reverted to his old language as a sportscaster and offered as argument against new taxes or defense cuts only the word "nuts!" Only after a Black Monday and a Wild Tuesday was he prevailed upon to hint, though still Delphically, at a possible compromise on the deficit. The vocabulary itself is enough to scare foreign investors. Any cuts must come out of civilian expenditures. But if you set aside interest on the debt, entitlements (like Social Security and Medicare) and the great untouchable of "defense" (which is really the cost of maintaining worldwide empire), even shutting down the rest of the government entirely wouldn't erase this year's deficit. The total bill for all departments other than defense as proposed in the Reagan budget for 1988 is almost $118 billion. The 1988 deficit is now projected to be $185 billion. So you could abolish civil government altogether and still be $67 billion in the red. Reagan has been hoping to stave off the deluge of debt until after he leaves office and then blame Congress and the Democrats—and by implication constitutional government itself—for the gigantic mess Reaganomics has created. The Profligate Era is ending with a deliberately created gridlock. This could breed a new fascistic mentality.

Let us imagine for a moment what would happen if the two parties in Congress escaped from the blighting shadow of Reagan's veto power and reached agreement on a really radical cut in the deficit. It could begin to restore confidence worldwide. True it would mean some bitter medicine at home, but that may be the one way to avoid a crash recalling 1929. But that improbable scenario may already be too late as stock markets gyrate frantically everywhere.

It is frightening that the economic crisis coincides with escalation in the Persian Gulf, where classic fears of appearing weak drag the United States and Iran closer to the brink of another and more unsettling Vietnam. We may be at a new chapter in human history when economic distress and war fears exacerbate every regional quarrel on the planet and darken the prospects for superpower accommodation.

I.F. Stone has been writing for The Nation *from Washington off and on since September 1940.*

Labor & Nicaragua

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sánchez was welcomed by friends of peace and democracy in Central America. Their number includes many of the delegates to the biennial national convention of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., meeting in Miami this week, and we hope they will take the occasion to add organized labor's backing to the Arias initiative. The prize provides implicit recognition of the fact that regionally led initiatives, rather than directives from the United States, offer the greatest hope for peace in Central America.

The Reagan Administration refuses to recognize this principle, however, as its continued lobbying for an additional $270 million in aid to the *contras* makes clear. The promise of a regional solution to conflict remains threatened by U.S. action. The war at home about who will decide U.S. policy continues, and labor can play an important role in that struggle.

At the last A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention, the Central America issue sparked the first floor fight over a foreign policy question in the federation's history. To the consternation of the leadership, representatives of a range of unions demanded an explicit condemnation of aid to the *contras*. Their resolution did not succeed, but the one that finally passed called for a negotiated solution to Central American conflicts rather than a military one, and left individual unions considerable freedom to interpret what the requirements of peaceful negotiation are. Moreover, the partial victory over the language of a single convention plank was dwarfed by the political significance of the floor discussion itself.

Since the 1950s, organized labor's internal debate has been stifled by the leadership's dual commitments to the cold war and to the pursuit of a murderously interventionist foreign policy in the Third World. That policy has hurt working people. As investment flowed from the United States to repressive military regimes abroad, many workers lost jobs. And as the leadership applauded or assisted in countless U.S.-sponsored wars, coups, assassinations and other forms of terror abroad, organized labor became increasingly separated from its natural allies within progressive communities in the United States—as well as potential allies within foreign labor movements that suffered U.S. aggression. By breaking silence on Central America, as Martin Luther King Jr. broke silence on Vietnam a generation ago, those who spoke up at the last convention suggested a radically different vision of labor's domestic and international role. They showed that organized labor need not be, as its critics maintain, a "special interest" group, single-mindedly bent on achieving material gains for its (dwindling) membership and indifferent or hostile to everyone else. It can be a genuine popular voice for democracy, if it recognizes that democracy at home requires democracy abroad and an end to the destructive U.S. policies in which the A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership remains complicit.

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Two years later, some things have changed and some have remained the same. In the recently published *Tunnel Vision: Labor, the World Economy, and Central America* (South End Press), Daniel Cantor and Juliet Schor report that unions representing just more than half the total membership of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. have now taken strong anti-*contra* positions, either by resolution or executive action. Even more remarkable, lobbyists for a dozen major unions, including five of the six largest in the A.F.L.-C.I.O., are making their opposition known to Congressional figures who are considered swing votes on *contra* aid.

Back at federation headquarters, however, the tired voices of reaction are still dominant within the international affairs department. While formally supportive of the Arias plan, the top officials are unwilling to oppose further assistance to the *contras*. This position stands to the right of even the mainstream of the Democratic Party, and all Democratic presidential candidates except the bellicose Albert Gore. On the eve of the national convention the leadership again exerted pressure for silence on the question.

Let us hope the silence is again broken, and even more forcefully than the last time. It would be good to see more debate within the labor movement. It would be even better to see the U.S. labor movement back on the side of workers in all the Americas.

More Gay-Bashing

Homophobia is still good politics, especially when it comes wrapped in Bible Belt rhetoric. That is the dismal lesson of the recent Congressional amendment to an appropriations bill that will hamstring safer-sex educational programs aimed at the gay community. The amendment was provoked by a sexually explicit comic book distributed by the New York City–based Gay Men's Health Crisis, which receives Federal funding. Unfortunately, the publication fell into the wrong hands—Jesse Helms's.

On October 14 Helms brandished it on the floor of the Senate and fulminated that it would "promote sodomy." He then introduced an amendment to a $129 billion labor, health and human services and education appropriations bill for fiscal 1988 that prohibits the expenditure of Federal funds for any AIDS education, information or prevention materials that "promote or encourage, directly or indirectly, homosexual sexual activities." Taking their cue from Helms, the senators cravenly passed the amendment by a vote of 94 to 2, with Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Lowell Weicker the only dissenters. Last week, after Representative William Dannemeyer had distributed photocopies, the House stated its approval of Helms's measure by a vote of 358 to 47. It now goes to a conference committee.

The vague and sweeping prohibition could be used to penalize groups that attempt to instruct gays on techniques for safer sex. Presumably, only exhortations to chastity will do.

Faced with a public health crisis, Congress stands ready to enact new-right rhetoric into law. "I am not equipped to pass moral judgments on my neighbors," Senator Weicker said during the debate. "I go by a very simple criterion: If somebody is ill, then they deserve the help of our government. Period, over and out."

Original research by Mark Gevisser.

Yves Volel

Yves Volel, the Haitian presidential candidate who was murdered by plainclothesmen in front of police headquarters in Port-au-Prince October 13, was a man who knew he was living on borrowed time. A few weeks before the fatal attack, he narrowly avoided death by ducking bullets fired from a car that drew alongside his. During the fifteen years that he taught math at the Dalton School in New York City, biding his time in anticipation of the day he could return to his country, there were several attempts on his life. In 1971 a school maintenance man was fired for carrying a gun. We students heard he had been looking for Volel, and our newspaper reported that he had worked for the Haitian government. But Volel never showed fear. He used to talk about practicing "discipline" so that if he was captured by the Duvalier forces, he would not crack under torture.

Like so many others, Volel returned to Haiti under the assumption that with "Baby Doc" Duvalier gone, the country would turn to democracy. When he saw that things were much the same, that the Tonton Macoutes were still active although now described as "plainclothesmen," that the military clung to power, he spoke out angrily. When he went to the Port-au-Prince police headquarters that Tuesday morning, he was seeking to represent a political prisoner who had been arrested without a warrant. Pointing out that the Haitian Constitution guaranteed the right to a lawyer, he offered his services. There are two versions of what happened next. According to the government, he brandished a revolver and attempted to storm the prison. After confiscating films of the assassination, the authorities released a picture of Volel lying in a pool of blood with a pistol at his side—proof, they said, of their story. Witnesses and a tape-recording of his final speech suggest that things happened quite differently. His strong, indignant voice was interrupted by sounds of commotion and gunfire.

After his return to Haiti, Volel was asked by the *Daltonian* if he feared for his life. He replied, "If I have to die, I will die. I am a human being. I don't want to be assassinated. I have children and family I would like to take care of, and I want to live to be helpful to my country. But if this comes in the fight, let this come, and I will go back to my God and He will judge me for what I have done on this earth."

PETER G. MEYER

Peter G. Meyer was a geometry student of Yves Volel at the Dalton School many years ago.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Hurry Up Please, It's Time. But Time for What?

By nightfall on "Black Monday," October 19, the mullers were out on the streets, shouting "Repent," "The binge stops here," "The party's over" and similar intimations of Closing Time in the West. But while the mullers were keening, the guardians of capital were manfully plugging the dike. The Dow Jones index closed Monday night at an official drop of 508 points, even though the volume of trading had the index lagging by two hours. By Tuesday morning the Federal Reserve, major banks and Dow-listed companies had rallied the bulls. Two banks lowered their interest rate, and blue chips rose as the big corporations bought up their own stock by the sackful. Other large indexes were still in decline, but the Dow, symbolically all-important, edged up and the panic began to subside.

As the bulls fought back, progressives and liberal Democrats joined a chorus alternately panic-stricken and gleeful, urging joint Congressional and presidential action to curb the deficit, balance the budget, raise taxes—in short, do everything humanly possible to insure the onset of a major depression. This call for belt-tightening austerity as a corrective to "profligate" ways is economic nonsense, as Roosevelt discovered when he abandoned his balanced-budget pledges of 1932; political nonsense, as Fritz Mondale discovered in 1984; blindness, since most of the country has enjoyed no party in the past decade and can therefore scarcely be asked to leave one now.

Today offers an opportunity for the left to challenge the Belt Tighteners' Chorus and make a compelling case for its economic vision and program. I should say here that the following observations stem from discussions with Professor Robert Pollin of the economics department at the University of California, Riverside, and also with Lynn Turgeon, professor of economics at Hofstra University.

The two immediate causes of the market collapse were the news that the West German central bank had raised its lending rate and that there was a $15.6 billion U.S. trade deficit for August. Both pieces of news presaged a competitive rise in U.S. interest rates. High rates make U.S. Treasury debt instruments attractive to foreign investors, thus helping to finance the overall U.S. debt. The traditional way to close a trade deficit is to weaken the currency, and indeed the dollar has declined about 45 percent against the mark and the yen since the spring of 1985. But this weak dollar has not helped exports and has disturbed those same foreign investors, who see the value of their U.S. holdings go down in terms of their domestic currency.

The more you raise interest rates to attract foreign investors, the more you discourage domestic borrowing and thus depress economic activity. So the short-term policy needed to stabilize the U.S. financial structure runs counter to what is needed to promote real growth. It should not be forgotten that in real terms (the lending rate minus the inflation rate) interest rates remain close to the historic high.

But if interest rates are to be lowered—a course essential to true economic recovery—what is to be done about the U.S. debt, government and private? The mullers howl for austerity. Yet right now the deficit accounts for about 4 to 5 percent of G.N.P. That is, of all spending in the economy, 4 to 5 percent is bought by the government's red ink. To get rid of 4 to 5 percent of total spending power in the economy would be similar to a medieval doctor curing anemia by bloodletting.

Remember that even if the financial markets are overheated, the overall economy is in precisely the opposite condition. The so-called capacity utilization rate—how much U.S. plant is put to productive use—is lower than it was when Ronald Reagan took over. The age-adjusted unemployment rate is higher. Unemployed people and resources cannot generate the revenues, hence the taxes, that would assist in paying off the deficit. Real wages, median incomes and median household spending have never, even during the present "party," recovered to the level of the early 1970s. Corporate investment and G.N.P. growth rates have also slowed over the past three years. For most Americans, borrowing is not a binge but the only way of staying above water.

When Reagan said plaintively in the midst of "Black Monday" that the economic indicators were unchanged, he was right. But people haven't been looking at those indicators properly. In 1982 the stock market boom commenced its rise from a very low level. It was preceded by a severe decline beginning in the late 1960s. In real values, the peak of the Reagan stock boom, on August 25 of this year, was lower than the average in 1965, the peak of the postwar boom, by more than 10 percent. In other words there has been a long-term economic decline, best expressed in the falling rate of profit, which has produced weak stock values and thus the takeover frenzy at the corporate level. This is not an overblown economy but a sluggish one, sustained chiefly by military spending.

So there is nothing irrational about Monday's panic. The bulls are winning skirmishes, just as they did in the days and months after "Black Tuesday" 1929, but recession is inevitable, its severity depending on the madness of plans hatched in Congress to balance the budget, curb the deficit and shackle demand with further taxes.

The call now should be not for an onslaught on the deficit but for a restructuring of the deficit so that more spending is done by the public sector under properly public control; not for a decrease in investment but for lowered real interest rates and investment guided by humane public criteria; for democratic allocation of the surplus value.

At this stage of the game there is no policy solution designed to improve one condition that will not in turn make something else worse. There is a logic to cutting the deficit, and that logic is premised on stabilizing the financial markets. It produces disaster in jobs and spending. The logic of economic growth and low real interest rates demands continued heavy borrowing, and that undermines the financial system. There's a logic to raising interest rates

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

to defend the dollar, but that similarly implies an assault on jobs and spending. Growth requires redistribution of income. There is no solution alluring to all sides, and politicians addressing this issue in the months to come may be judged by the clarity with which they choose their side.

The Second Thinkers

On the eve of the crash, it was my fortune to listen to ardent converts to the system about to be exposed to such duress. I was persuaded by Christopher Hitchens to drop in on the final Sunday session of the Second Thoughts Conference in Washington, D.C., organized by David Horowitz and Peter Collier, the Reagan era's farcical echo of the age of Whittaker Chambers.

At that late stage of the proceedings the organizers were somewhat discomposed by events of the previous day. The Saturday session had been designed as a sort of Masque of the Second Thinkers, an ideological Halloween, with ashes by the bucket and sackcloth by the bale. But plans had gone awry with the swerve toward Third Thoughts by Bruce Cameron. You will recall that Cameron, in concert with Robert Leiken, had been one of the more influential lobbyists for *contra* aid on Capitol Hill, swaying many an anxious Democrat with his Second Thinker's denunciations of Sandinista tyranny and betrayed promises. The Reaganites, spotting a useful ally, fortified Cameron with material aid—$66,000 from Spitz Channel's Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty—and let him go to work.

But at the conference Cameron declared that the *contras* were "an army without a vision of a future society," and could not win. He pressed on to attack the core axiom of Horowitz-Collierism, proclaiming, "There is no wing of the Democratic Party soft on communism. . . . Liberals are not procommunist or anti-American." He was now, Cameron told the uneasy crowd, a lobbyist for Mozambique.

When we entered the subterranean chamber of the Grand Hyatt, rented for the event by the National Forum (an enterprise of former Alabama Senator Jeremiah Denton and his son), Stanley Crouch, a black writer for *The Village Voice*, was up on the platform. His observations aroused little excitement until he began to make fun of Malcolm X's theological notion that all was well, cosmically speaking, until about 6,000 years ago when a devil figure introduced the white man to the planet. This stirred the audience to howls of merriment. There seemed, on a quick count, to be about three dark-skinned persons among the 200 or so present, and afterward I asked Crouch if he felt, as I did, that the hearty guffaws had come not at the specifics of Malcolm X's views but rather at the occasion of one black man being conveniently guyed by another. Crouch said no, and I asked whether he believed the audience would have laughed so heartily if he had described with equal vigor some foolish concept from Christianity or Judaism. He said he thought so. I would like to see him try.

I sat in a row with Robert Leiken at one end and Carl Gershman at the other, and listened to the final speaker, David Horowitz. Since the title of the panel was "What Is To Be Done?" I eagerly awaited the sketching in of broad vistas of advance. None were offered. He seemed oddly uneasy, going through the motions of the convert but without much conviction. Once or twice he shouted, "Thank God for the C.I.A." exactly in the manner of Jimmy Swaggart crying "Praise Jesus."

In gestalt Horowitz resembles a Shachtmanite, and his discourse would have been more or less unfathomable to someone unacquainted with Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist fundamentals. God knows what ordinary conservatives like the Dentons make of him. Perhaps they wonder whether those Manchu whiskers conceal the lineaments of a Third or even Fourth Thinker. Both he and Collier face the dilemma of all renegades living on their memories: that sooner or later their stories will grow whiskers too, and fresh renegades will jostle them aside. Hence the ever more rabid upping of the ante, in the manner of Chambers or Elizabeth Bentley; hence the urgent cries that their duty is to expose the traitors in our midst, the plots that menace American democracy.

Horowitz recalled the upbringing of his sister and himself in a Communist family, where, as so often happened, the children observed and resented the long hours their parents spent away from them, for reasons of "party work." "My sister will never forgive them," he cried; then depicted his own deprivation. *He had never been allowed to go to Doris Day and Rock Hudson movies*, but rather was forced to sit through uplifting Soviet features. Here, at least, one could see the rebel with his cause.

Footnote: On October 3 a delegation from Berkeley, California, engaged on a sister-city visit to León, Nicaragua, happened to be standing about in the lobby of the Intercontinental Hotel in Managua. Many of them, including the Mayor of Berkeley, Lonnie Hancock, and her husband, California State Assemblyman Tom Bates, observed an altercation at the checkout desk between a clerk and Horowitz, Collier and that other Zen master of the second thought, Ronald Radosh. Bates tells my colleague Leon Lazaroff that after listening to the altercation, in which the clerk was refusing to release the trio's baggage until the bill was paid, he heard Horowitz insist that this bill was being picked up by the United States Information Agency. Bates remarked ironically that U.S.I.A. could not have paid for three more objective reporters, to which Horowitz replied, "There's no intent for us to be objective." He had earlier indicated his scholarly detachment with the cry "I hope to God the *contras* overthrow this fucking regime." Finally a white limousine arrived from the U.S. Embassy, carrying an official who paid the bill and bore the trio off.

The U.S.I.A. confirms that it paid for two days of hotels and meals for the three, along with airline tickets and a $100-a-day honorarium for each. The trip took place under the aegis of the American Participant Program. Aside from incoherent abuse, Horowitz declines comment on any aspect of his activities discussed in this column.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN
JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ Deshredding Ollie's Papers

Imagine if Congressional investigators or special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh had copies of the documents Lieut. Col. Oliver North had shredded. That might be possible. The select committees on the Iran/*contra* affair are trying to gain access to the National Security Council's computer systems on the assumption that material written by key participants in the scandal may still be retrievable, even if it had been erased. According to a committee staff member, this could potentially produce copies of the documents North destroyed, as well as exhume the electronic messages, known as PROF notes, written by national security adviser John Poindexter. The Tower commission was able to locate the PROF notes generated by North but could find only some of those written by Poindexter, who seems to have been more conscientious than North in deleting his files. Now, the staff member explained, so long as the space on a computer disk that was once occupied by compromising information has not been filled by a subsequent entry, computer experts may be able to pull up that information.

White House counsel Arthur Culvahouse Jr. has been responding slowly to the committees' request for access to the relevant N.S.C. computers, said the staff member, who has seen correspondence between the committees and Culvahouse. An assistant to Culvahouse confirms that the committees have made such a request, but the lawyer in charge of the matter for the counsel's office would not comment.

The committees may not be able to conduct this high-tech inquiry before they shut down, which will be soon after the release of their final report, expected in mid-November. If the White House succeeds in stalling the committees, it will still have to face Walsh, whose investigation could last years and who would inherit the fight for access to such back-from-the-dead evidence.

■ Bosco Plays the China Card

On October 5 about a dozen journalists gathered at an Italian restaurant to toast the first anniversary of the downing of Eugene Hasenfus's plane. Toward the end of the evening, the assembly was joined by Bosco Matamoros, the Washington-based spokesman on military activities for the *contras*, who had been invited by one of the celebrants. Matamoros arrived with two strong and silent types, one of whom wore sunglasses in the dark bistro. In responding to a question about what the *contras* intend to do if Congress refuses to approve military aid for the rebels, he mentioned a "secret" *contra* mission to China and remarked that a number of *contras* are now studying Chinese. His not-too-secret point: If the United States doesn't assist the *contras*, the Chinese might and thus gain a toehold in Central America. Oliver North did discuss with a Chinese official the possibility of China selling arms to the rebels, but the *contra* trip to China may exist only in Matamoros's imagination. His intent appeared to be to plant a story to scare Congress into believing the Chinese may be coming. As of this writing, no one in the press has yet taken the bait.

■ Barry's Kids

In 1988 the citizens of Arizona will again have the opportunity to elect a right-wing kook to office. In 1986 Evan Mecham was elected Governor. Since then Mecham's impressive stupidity and frank racism have made him a national embarrassment and the subject of a statewide recall drive. This time around the loony tune of choice is Lewis Tambs, former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, who is strongly considering running for the Senate. A former professor at Arizona State University, Tambs used his credentials as a right-wing academic to win diplomatic posts in the Reagan Administration. In Costa Rica, Tambs assisted the *contras*' southern front and oversaw the construction of a secret *contra* air base. A top official in the State Department told Tambs that his actions "at the very least . . . posed serious questions of propriety." And in March 1987 the Costa Rican government filed a protest with Washington charging Tambs with a "flagrant violation of national sovereignty." Barry Goldwater, the original Arizona extremist, has already called on Mecham to resign. Tambs offers the possibility of still more embarrassment. Goldwater may soon have to disown another of his political heirs in order to protect his home-state party.

■ Marlboro's Man

"Do you consider, Dr. Koop, 1.5 million abortions per year or cigarette smoking to pose a greater threat to our nation's health?" Representative Thomas Bliley Jr. asked the Surgeon General at a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing last year. For offering such questions, Bliley has earned more money from tobacco industry political action committees than any other House member, according to a recent study conducted by Public Voice for Food and Health Policy. A Republican member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which deals with many tobacco-related issues, he received $23,650 from tobacco interests between 1983 and 1986. (Following him were the House minority leader, Bob Michel, with $18,200; Charlie Rose, with $17,650; and the majority whip, Tony Coelho, with $17,050.) Bliley represents Richmond, Virginia, where Philip Morris is the biggest employer. He is "the most visible Congressman defending tobacco," one Democratic committee aide noted. "His purpose is to stop the committee from restricting the tobacco industry in any way." Bliley has developed a reputation for using every procedural twist and dilatory tactic he can. He once invoked a little-used rule to suspend a hearing just as C. Everett Koop began to blast smoking. When the hearing was reconvened, weeks later, Bliley asked his abortion question. (Koop stated that abortions pose no health problem.) Asked why Bliley pulled in the most from the tobacco PACs, his press secretary replied with a note of pride, "He's the only member of the committee who stands up for the tobacco interests."

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ARTICLES.

AN INTERNATION STORY

Kissinger and The 'Dirty War'

MARTIN EDWIN ANDERSEN

Just three months after Argentina's generals took power in 1976, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger gave that country's military a green light to continue its "dirty war," according to a State Department memorandum obtained by InterNation. This document shows that in early 1977 Robert Hill, then the U.S. Ambassador to Buenos Aires, told a top Carter Administration official that Kissinger had given his approval to the repression in which at least 9,000 people were kidnapped and secretly murdered. Kissinger, he charged, put his imprimatur on the massive disappearances in a June 10, 1976, meeting in Santiago, Chile, with Argentina's Foreign Minister, Adm. César Guzzetti. Both men were attending the Sixth General Assembly of the Organization of American States, whose agenda, ironically, had been dominated by the human rights issue.

Guzzetti was one of the most outspoken advocates of the dirty war. In August 1976 he told the United Nations: "My idea of subversion is that of the left-wing terrorist organizations. Subversion or terrorism of the right is not the same thing. When the social body of the country has been contaminated by a disease that eats away at its entrails, it forms antibodies. These antibodies cannot be considered in the same way as the microbes."

The ninety-minute early morning meeting, at Santiago's Hotel Carrera, across from the Moneda Palace, came just three weeks after Hill had urgently warned Kissinger of the worsening Argentine rights record. A word from the Secretary of State would have helped rein in the generals. Although a secret analysis by the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, dated April 5, 1976, noted that "human rights could become a problem area as the military clamps down on terrorism," it went on: "To date, however, the junta has followed a reasonable, prudent line in an obvious attempt to avoid being tagged with a 'Made in Chile' label." According to the records of the Center for Legal and Social Studies, Argentina's foremost human rights group, by the time Kissinger and Guzzetti met, 1,022 people had been "disappeared" forever. At least another 7,938 met the same fate afterward.

When Kissinger arrived at the Santiago conference, Hill said, the Argentine generals were nervous about the prospect of being called on the carpet by the United States for their human rights record. But Kissinger merely told Guzzetti the regime should solve the problem before the U.S. Congress reconvened in 1977. *A buen entendedor, pocas palabras* ("To those quick to understand, few words are needed"). Within three weeks of the meeting a wave of wholesale executions began, and hundreds of detainees were killed in reprisal for attacks by leftist guerrillas. The memorandum shows that Hill believed the responsibility for this ballooning state terrorism to be Kissinger's.

Hill is dead; Guzzetti suffered lasting brain damage in a 1977 attack. Kissinger referred inquiries to former Secretary of State William Rogers, who was with him in Santiago. Rogers did "not specifically remember" a meeting with Guzzetti, but added: "What Henry would have said if he had had such a meeting was that human rights were embedded in our policy, for better or worse. He'd have said sympathetic things about the need for effective methods against terrorism, but without abandoning the rule of law." But Patricia Derian, Carter's Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, confirmed the account of Hill's charges and was "nauseated" to learn of Kissinger's role. Two former U.S. diplomats also corroborate Hill's story.

Hill's own past appears to put him above suspicion that his charges against Kissinger were politically motivated. "Hill's biography reads like a satirical left-wing caricature of a '*yanqui* imperialist,'" noted the authoritative newsletter "Latin America." He was a former vice president of W.R. Grace and a former director of the United Fruit Company. Despite five ambassadorial postings to Spanish-speaking countries, he never mastered the language. Hill was directly linked in testimony before the U.S. Senate with the planning of the coup that overthrew the elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954. Before being assigned to Buenos Aires by Richard Nixon, he was Assistant Secretary of Defense responsible for international security.

Like many others, Hill had greeted the coup against the outrageously corrupt, incompetent government of Juan Perón's widow, Isabel, with relief. He was especially impressed by the military's willingness to crack down on top drug traffickers, who had been protected by Isabel Perón's inner circle. By the time of the coup, a siege atmosphere was gripping the U.S. Embassy; a U.S. honorary consul had been murdered by the left-wing Peronist Montoneros, and a U.S. diplomat had been wounded by the Marxist E.R.P. guerrillas. The Ambassador's residence was heavily fortified; Hill shuttled back and forth under a guard worthy of Al Capone. Most U.S. businessmen had fled Buenos Aires, fearful of kidnapping or death. "There are difficult days ahead," Hill warned the National Security Council in a secret Country Analysis and Strategy Paper (CASP) the day before the March 24 coup. "The strategy is essentially one of protecting our people and property from terrorism and our trade and investments from economic nationalism during this trying period."

Moreover, human rights did not immediately appear to be a problem to Hill. The April 5 Bureau of Intelligence and Research analysis concluded that "terrorism from the right will be more susceptible to control than that from the left,

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Martin Edwin Andersen is writing a book on the Argentine "dirty war," to be published next year by Addison-Wesley. InterNation is an international consortium of publications, drawing on a global network of journalists.

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because right-wing operatives frequently have been attached to groups now directly under military supervision."

Less than a month later events had overtaken any such wishful thinking. On May 18 two prominent Uruguayans exiled in Buenos Aires were dragged from their homes by unidentified men. Héctor Gutiérrez Ruíz was a former president of the Uruguayan House of Deputies; Zelmar Michelini, a charismatic former senator. Neither was involved in armed politics, nor did they belong to the ultraradical left. Kissinger himself cabled the U.S. Embassies in Montevideo and Buenos Aires, asking for more details following reports by Amnesty International about the "brutal detention" of the pair. Two days later Hill cabled Kissinger that "such an operation would be extremely difficult if not impossible to carry out without [government of Argentina] acquiescence."

On May 20 the politicians' bodies were found in a car with those of two other people. One of Gutiérrez Ruíz's eyes was poked out, his knuckles were mangled and burns scarred his front and back. Half his face had been crushed. Michelini had a bullet through his head. Their killers left leaflets suggesting the slayings were the work of leftists angered by the victims' supposed "betrayal" of an Uruguayan guerrilla group. On May 25 Hill sent a secret cable to the Secretary of State, requesting instructions. The page-long copy made available to me was heavily excised, with only the first two and the last lines left untouched.

Hill wrote: "In view of the general worsening human rights situation here, I believe the time has come for a démarche at the highest level. Hence, I request instructions to ask for an urgent appointment with the foreign minister. . . . In view of the pace of developments, I would appreciate reply by immediate cable." Hill's request was approved by Under Secretary of State Joseph Sisco.

On May 27 Kissinger sent a secret cable, "Subject: Human Rights Situation in Argentina," to the embassies in Montevideo and Buenos Aires:

> Acting Assistant Secretary [Hewson] Ryan called in Ambassador Vásquez May 27 to warn him about the growing concern in the US about the violence in Argentina and the reported disappearances of individuals. This concern is being expressed by major universities, the responsible press—such as *The New York Times*—and by members of both Houses of Congress, and is having an unfavorable impact on Argentina's image in this country. If this continues, it would make cooperation with Argentina difficult, as happened in the case of Chile. . . . Ambassador Ryan said there is concern in the US not only about the arrests being carried out by the [Argentines] but also about the failure of the [government] to control the activities of right-wing terrorist groups.

If Kissinger had any lingering doubts about what was happening in Argentina, they were dispelled by subordinates such as Hill. Yet his cable is noteworthy for its blandness; his rendition of Ryan's meeting shows the Argentines were told outside pressure—not U.S. policy—endangered business as usual. Two weeks later Kissinger went to Chile.

Hill had quickly realized what was occurring. The new military regime was not limiting its rampage to the guerrillas, against whom it used methods that violated every accepted convention of warfare and the treatment of prisoners. It had embarked on a crusade against anyone threatening the armed forces' version of what they called "Western Christian civilization." Hill's alarm grew as he heard of examples of the horror. Three priests and two seminarians were murdered by vengeful police; an American priest and the daughter of a U.S. missionary were tortured; a progressive Catholic bishop was killed in a staged car crash.

"Hill was shaken, he became very disturbed, by the case of the son of a thirty-year embassy employee, a student who was arrested, never to be seen again," recalled former *New York Times* reporter Juan de Onis. "Hill took a personal interest." He went to the Interior Minister, an army general with whom he had worked on drug cases, saying, "Hey, what about this? We're interested in this case." He buttonholed Guzzetti and, finally, President Jorge R. Videla himself. "All he got was stonewalling; he got nowhere," de Onis said. "His last year was marked by increasing disillusionment and dismay, and he backed his staff on human rights right to the hilt." This view of events was confirmed by Wayne Smith, who was Hill's political officer at the time.

It was a troubled, angry Hill who met in early 1977 with a senior Carter Administration official, eager to unburden himself about Kissinger's role and explain why the generals were only partly to blame for the slaughter. According to the memorandum:

> Hill said that he had made arrangements seven times for a Kissinger visit to Argentina. Each time the Secretary cancelled. Finally Kissinger decided to go to the OAS meeting. . . . In the middle of the meetings, the Secretary wanted to visit Buenos Aires. This time the Argentines refused because they did not want to interrupt OAS activities being held in a neighboring state. Kissinger and Foreign Minister Guzzetti agreed to meet in Santiago.
>
> The Argentines were very worried that Kissinger would lecture to them on human rights. Guzzetti and Kissinger had a very long breakfast but the Secretary did not raise the subject. Finally Guzzetti did. Kissinger asked how long will it take you (the Argentines) to clean up the problem. Guzzetti replied that it would be done by the end of the year. Kissinger approved.
>
> *In other words, Ambassador Hill explained, Kissinger gave the Argentines the green light.* [Emphasis added.]
>
> . . .
>
> Later (about August), the Ambassador discussed the matter personally with Kissinger, on the way back to Washington from a Bohemian Grove meeting in San Francisco. Kissinger confirmed the Guzzetti conversation. Hill said that the Secretary felt that Ford would win the election. Hill disagreed. In any case, the Secretary wanted Argentina to finish its terrorist problem before year end—before Congress reconvened in January 1977.
>
> In September, Hill prepared an eyes only memorandum for the Secretary urging that the U.S. vote against an IDB [Inter-American Development Bank] loan on Harkin [human rights] grounds. Hill felt that he would strengthen his hand in dealing with the Argentines. The memo was given to Assistant Secretary [Harry] Shlaudeman. The latter asked the Ambassador personally if Hill really wanted to send the memo to the Secretary, who had already decided to vote for the loan. Shlaudeman suggested that the Secretary might fire Hill. Hill told Shlaudeman to send the memo. (Hill's IDB

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memo was ignored. We voted for the loan, warning the Argentines, however, that we might not be able to support future Argentine projects in the IDB unless the human rights picture changes.)

When I asked Kissinger spokesperson Chris Vick about what transpired in Santiago, she said the former Secretary of State "doesn't have a great deal of memory about events in 1975 and 1976." She said Kissinger expressed "a great deal of affection for Ambassador Hill." Asked about whether they shared the trip back from the Bohemian Grove retreat, she replied, "Yeah, I guess he was on the plane."

Vick also referred me to Kissinger's public address at the O.A.S. conference, titled "Human Rights and the Western Hemisphere," in which Kissinger proclaimed: "One of the most compelling issues of our time, and one which calls for the concerted action of all responsible peoples and nations, is the necessity to protect and extend the fundamental rights of humanity."

The rhetoric, however, was at variance with accounts of Kissinger's meeting with Guzzetti, with the background to the O.A.S. speech itself and with the Secretary of State's attitude once he was out of public office. A U.S. diplomat who asked to remain anonymous told me he had been told of Kissinger's green light by Argentine military sources. Wayne Smith, Hill's political officer, says, "Kissinger told Guzzetti in Santiago, Look, we *have* to do these things [speak out publicly on the rights issue], but don't take it too seriously." Certainly some of the Latin Americans at the O.A.S. remained unimpressed by Kissinger's speech. "He said genocide gets you 'adverse international judgment,'" said one Venezuelan representative of the social democratic government of Carlos Andres Pérez. "Has he forgotten where he comes from?"

There was a further suggestion that Kissinger's commitment on human rights was meant for public consumption only. Robert White, who later became Ambassador to El Salvador, was deputy representative of the U.S. delegation at the Santiago conference. He had made a public statement there on human rights, based on a position paper approved by the State Department. Kissinger sent him a telegram of reprimand (although he later backed down after former Representative William Mailliard, the head of the delegation, sent his own stinging reply to Kissinger). White also had a report from what he regarded as a reliable Chilean source of a meeting between Kissinger and Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet. "Kissinger told Pinochet he would have to make reference to human rights in his speech," White told me, "but that's all he would hear on the subject."

In 1978, long after the Argentine military's policy of creating massive disappearances had been conclusively demonstrated, making the country an international pariah, Kissinger was the guest of Argentine President Videla during the World Cup soccer competition. The generals used the visit to show they enjoyed the sympathy of the onetime superstar of U.S. diplomacy. At the end of the tournament Kissinger held a news conference in which he criticized the Carter Administration for not understanding that human rights were a necessary casualty in the battle against terrorism. He also spent much time in public in the company of the regime's Minister of the Economy—and David Rockefeller's friend—José Martínez de Hoz. Known as "the Wizard of Hoz," his policies were the ideological framework for the murder of hundreds of labor activists unconnected to the guerrillas.

A firm, principled word from Kissinger in June 1976 might have stopped the bloodbath in the making. In the early months of military rule, the armed forces were not unaware of international pressure for human rights. Even as late as the end of 1976, U.S. diplomats learned, Argentina's top military leaders were still debating the international consequences of the repression. By the time Jimmy Carter took office, however, the killing had gone too far for the generals to turn back.

Hill returned to Buenos Aires from the United States in early September 1976. "The Argentine press had been saved for him and he sifted through stacks of newspapers," the Hill memorandum reads. "He saw that the terrorist death toll had climbed steeply. The Ambassador said that he wondered—although he had no proof—whether the Argentine government was not trying to solve its terrorist problem before the end of the year."

As Hill suspected, the mass execution of prisoners and suspects became a generalized phenomenon only after the Kissinger-Guzzetti meeting. More than seventy people, including the three priests and two seminarians, were murdered in reprisal for the July 2 bombing of a police headquarters by the Montoneros in which a score of people were killed. On August 20, thirty people were executed and their bodies blown up in reprisal for the assassination of retired Gen. Omar Actis. More than fifty were executed in response to the bombing of a police station in the provincial capital of

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La Plata. Thirty others were slain in reprisal for an attack on the Ministry of Defense. Forty more died over the New Year's holiday in retaliation for the killing of a colonel.

"It sickened me," said Patt Derian, "that with an imperial wave of his hand, an American could sentence people to death on the basis of a cheap whim. As time went on I saw Kissinger's footprints in a lot of countries. It was the repression of a democratic ideal." □

A SIXTIES REUNION

The Real 'Big Chill' in Michigan

ELLEN PERLEY FRANK

When the temperature hit the 90s on Labor Day afternoon, most of the 200 people at a three-day reunion of 1960s Ann Arbor activists had left Camp Tamarack in Ortonville, Michigan, and headed back to their widely scattered homes. Four heat-weary stragglers—three women and the 4-year-old son of one of them—stood in front of a camp cabin and weighed the pros and cons of one more swim, even though the lifeguard had gone off duty. Tequila Minsky, a New York photographer and professional party-giver, settled the discussion by declaring, "We've never followed the rules—why should we now?"

There is a cliché about 1960s activists: that they opted for the rules, sold out, took upwardly mobile jobs, bought pricey foreign cars and feel guilty about the gap between their past and present lives. One major frame around this picture is *The Big Chill*, the movie written and directed by Larry Kasdan, a 1970 graduate of the University of Michigan. In 1960s Ann Arbor, Kasdan was working for a university film society while thousands of other students, teachers and "outside agitators" pursued their avenues of politics in a community that throbbed with activism of all stripes. None of these people forgot their education. Kasdan went on to make Hollywood movies based largely on the hundreds of movies he watched in college. Maybe Kasdan and his friends traded in their ideals for their careers and fat bank accounts, but most of the Michigan graduates I know have bitterly criticized Kasdan for popularizing this image. The Labor Day reunion revealed that the activists have not abandoned their politics; the depth and diversity of their continuing political commitment came as an exalting surprise.

Ann Arbor in the 1960s was the home of the first draft board sit-in, the first anti-Vietnam War teach-in and the birthplace of Students for a Democratic Society; along with Columbia University and the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Michigan was the campus that most embodied the social-political movements of the decade. Those days of mass and often confrontational politics have long since faded, but at the reunion it was evident that many veteran activists have adapted their politics to a more sedate life and the needs of their own communities.

On the second afternoon of the reunion, a committee of five veteran activists sat cross-legged at the end of a dock and worked up a page-and-a-half-long statement for the whole group. It affirms: "We have come to understand that attaining the goals of a just, peaceful, equitable and ecologically sound society requires a lifetime of commitment." It also lists a number of ongoing causes, beginning with "the growing menace of the nuclear arms race" and ending with "the callous disregard of the plight of our elders." The document was accepted with whoops, cheers, applause and nary a nay after a dinner of kosher fried chicken and egg noodles. (Camp Tamarack is a Jewish environmental camp, with totem poles in its dining room doorway carved with faces representing the twelve tribes of Israel.)

Have times changed? Richard Levy, who teaches English to adult Chinese immigrants in Boston, pointed out that "the committee was asked not to mention a laundry list of causes. . . . In 1968 you couldn't have gotten a group of political people to agree even on punctuation, and here they did what we asked them not to do, and it was accepted unanimously."

The group's political diversity was documented in columns where people wrote their "Current Affiliation" when they signed the statement. This long affiliation roster includes: "Saskatchewan Coalition Against Cutbacks," "Rockford, Illinois, Peace and Justice Action," "Physicians for Social Responsibility and medical director, Jackson and Livingston [Michigan] Counties," "historian and agitator," "*Gay Community News*, Resist, Mobilization for Survival," "Ann Arbor City Council," "Psychologist, work with peace and women's issues," "auto worker/Detroiters for Dignity," "theater worker," "Marxist historian," "peace research—Cambridge, Mass.," "M.D., San Francisco County Jail," "registered nurse, Campaign Against Apartheid," "attorney and past president, National Lawyers Guild," and on and on and on.

You might notice one trend in these identifications. These are highly skilled and educated people, including many lawyers, doctors, artists and Ph.D.s who once marched on the Pentagon and now channel their politics into their work. Others have stuck with the 1960s call of working-class politics: Richard Feldman, one of the reunion organizers, has worked in a Ford truck plant for seventeen years and recently completed and found a publisher for an oral history of thirty auto workers. Frank Hammer, president of a United Auto Workers local, said, "When I told the people that I work with that I was coming to this reunion, one of them said, 'What we need is a little bit of the sixties in the eighties.' We are not only part of that history but in our own separate ways have continued that history."

The political scope has scaled down since then. "I remember people seriously telling me, 'The American Revolution is going to happen in a year or two,'" recalled Eric Chester, a former S.D.S. leader who now teaches economics at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and who proved at the reunion to be a whiz at child care.

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"I have not lost the values I acquired in the sixties. I have learned that the appropriate size of my sphere of influence is a lot smaller than the one I and we tried to work in during the sixties and seventies. Within this sphere, I do my best." That is what Cendra Lynn, a psychologist who specializes in grief and loss, wrote in the reunion's "yearbook"—a word processor that took in many reflections and autobiographies during the course of three days. The kids loved the machine. Joseph Hammer, age 10, wrote, "See ya later CAMPERS." And Joyce Kornbluh, a historian and twenty-seven-year veteran of the University of Michigan's Labor Studies Center, wrote, "I am planning to continue the struggle to the end of my days on earth, and then plan to organize and radicalize the angels."

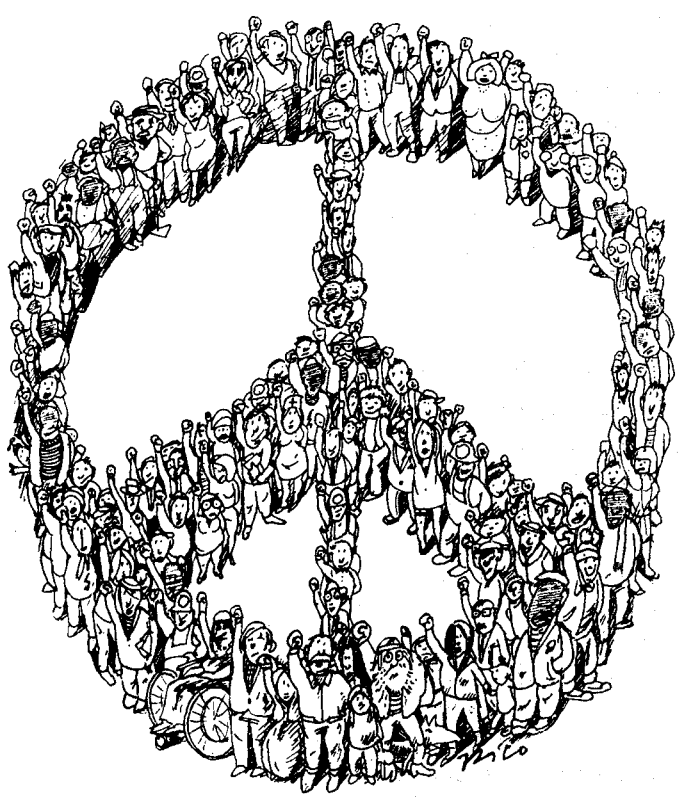
Countless historians, journalists, sociologists, anthropologists and filmmakers, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other police agencies, have all done their own interpretation of the 1960s. But at The Real Big Chill we discovered that that rebellious era is far bigger than any single story. Most of us came to this reunion thinking that the 1960s in Ann Arbor were Our 1960s and that we'd know almost everyone there. Wrong. Veterans of S.D.S., many of whom hadn't seen one another for fifteen years, might have accounted for forty of the 200 people. "And there were as many kids—forty-eight—as there once would have been dogs," said Chicago neonatal specialist Dan Sobel, who did bring his dog. I was expecting to see many old friends who had been active in the avant-garde arts, the Ann Arbor Film Festival or writers from *The Michigan Daily* or the *Ann Arbor Sun*, a biweekly alternative newspaper. But very few representatives from the political/cultural wing of 1960s Ann Arbor showed up at this reunion. Most of the people there had vaguely familiar faces and, oddly (except for the trimmed or vanished beards and the shorter and graying hair), they all looked as they did Back Then. Was this an illusion created by the bathing-suit-and-shorts informality of the Camp Tamarack setting? Or does my memory allow people to age at the same rate I do?

The combination of people at the reunion made for some strange bedfellows. After their first night in a cabin with a couple from Detroit who were members of the Revolutionary Communist Party, California artists Judy Ehrlich and Nick Bertoni sleepily grumbled that they'd been kept up most of the night by their bunkmates' boisterous show-and-tell trip down memory lane with photographs of arrests at various 1960s demonstrations. At the "Memorial for Fallen Comrades" on Sunday night, the R.C.P. man stood up and said, "I'd like to remember Chairman Mao Zedong, who died in his last great struggle—trying to defend China against the re-establishment of capitalism." A few minutes later the R.C.P. woman stood up and said, "I'd like to remember John Belushi, who died under mysterious circumstances. The media thinks so too. I miss him a lot."

At that memorial I waited and waited for someone to speak in memory of the one person many of us had known who had died in a violent and mistaken political act: Diana Oughton, one of three Weathermen killed in unexpected self-immolation when a bomb went off in 1970 in a New York City townhouse. Finally, I stood up and spoke of her work as a teacher at the long-gone Children's Community School in Ann Arbor. The ice was broken. Michael Zweig, then an S.D.S. leader, now a professor of economics at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, spoke in memory of Ted Gold and Terry Robbins, who were also killed in that explosion.

The splits in S.D.S., then the violence and fugitive years of the Weathermen, were much-avoided topics at this reunion. There was no desire to root out bad memories and old conflicts. Former Weathermen Bill Ayers (he now teaches education at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle) and Bernardine Dohrn (she works for a Chicago law firm) were at the reunion with their children, but they stayed at the beach during the four workshops and left before the memorial. I canoed for hours with Bernardine and Chesa (son of the imprisoned Kathy Boudin and Dave Gilbert). She spoke with frustration about the seven hearings she's had before the New York Bar Association's Ethics Committee, which still will not admit her to the bar. She said that maybe she'll try in Illinois. The lifeguard yelled repeatedly through a bullhorn to stay in sight of the dock. I complained. Chesa asked, "What's wrong with the lifeguard saying that?" Bernardine answered, "She's anti-authority. She wants her privacy. She wants to be left alone." Was she talking about me or about herself?

On Sunday morning about a hundred people crowded into a Camp Tamarack meeting room for a workshop titled "Telling It Like It Was" and subtitled "What Really Happened in the Sixties?" Bret Eynon, who has set up an oral history project that interviewed 175 Ann Arbor 1960s activists, led off. Eynon's fifteen-minute package history began with pickets in front of the Ann Arbor F.W. Woolworth in 1960, a solidarity action for the lunchroom desegregation



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pickets in the South. The long but fast list of events included many sit-ins, both small (thirty-nine arrests at the Ann Arbor draft board in 1965) and large (240 at the County Building in a 1968 solidarity action with welfare mothers). Eynon mentioned the initial and later divisions within S.D.S., the spread of women's groups, anti-Reserve Officer Training Corps confrontations with the police, three days of street riots in 1969, teach-ins against the war in Vietnam, and then he swept into the 1970s with the Indochina Peace Campaign, the emergence of John Sinclair's White Panther Party and the inroads into Ann Arbor city government (two City Council seats) through the Human Rights Party.

"Overviews are all right for making you remember things," said Sondra Stein, now associate director of the Massachusetts Adult Literacy Program. From all around the room people filled in the many blanks in Eynon's minihistory. One particularly vivid memory was the 1968 football game when 100,000 people watched a surprise halftime show—an antiwar demonstration.

The people in the room gave contextual life to a list of events that sounded remotely abstract in the retelling. Eric Chester said, "When we talk about the sixties we might find a unity that wasn't there. There weren't just personality differences but major underlying political questions. In 1964 Ann Arbor S.D.S. was in strong disagreement with the national organization. Their slogan was 'Part of the way with L.B.J.' That was not a trivial disagreement."

From across the room someone added, "We presented ourselves as revolutionaries, and there was no revolution. A lot of people now say, 'So what?' But we lived in a very special time. We picked up the world and moved it someplace. The sense of possibility, the sense of anger we had then must not be forgotten." And another man added, "We ended a war and brought down a President. If we did that then, we could do much more now."

Could we? Like the people in Larry Kasdan's movie, we've shivered through our own Big Chill—but it is the loss of a large supportive community rather than the loss of politics or ideals. Adulthood took its toll and we dispersed, followed our talents, sharpened our specialties, had children. "We've paid our dues through separation. What was important was the community, that extended family," said Alan Haber, then an S.D.S. leader, now a Berkeley, California, cabinetmaker and organizer of a warehouse building for community groups.

Few of the people at the reunion seemed adrift without that anchor of community. Yes, there was an occasional voice of despair, such as the man who said in a workshop, "One of the reasons why I came here is because most of the important things in my life happened in the sixties and early seventies, and I want to know how to carry it on." But Julia Wrigley, who teaches the sociology of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, seemed to speak for the reunion group as a whole when she said, "Ann Arbor in the sixties was a transformative period for all of us. We learned how to deal with authority on many levels. We learned how to speak up. There's no going back. Once you become assertive you don't just give it up." □

LETTER FROM EUROPE

From Public TV To 'Dallasty'

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

The battle over French television is now being joined in earnest. Last spring the government surveyed the terrain of existing channels, radically redeployed its forces and accomplished the unheard of: the world's first transfer into private hands of a big and successful public television network. There followed a general scramble for stars, serials and exclusive sports events, with huge sums commanded from the zealous and newly placed competitors. Now all this has to be translated into what matters: ratings as a measure of advertising revenue. Not all the participants in this battle—two public networks, three commercial ones and a channel of pay TV—will survive, and so the mood in the industry is a strange mixture of soap opera and skin game. But the situation in France is both part and illustration of a much more crucial struggle. With powerful satellites sent into orbit and cables spreading throughout the Continent, television, like radio, will soon know no frontiers. What is at stake is Europe's cultural future. Will it follow the American pattern? If it does, the fact that such utter commercialization might be carried out by native masters of the media will be small consolation.

France is both the laggard and the leader in this movement to privatize. Three years ago its television was still entirely public. This makes a contrast with the public/quasi-commercial mix that has long characterized TV elsewhere in Europe. In Italy commercial television has been slowly invading the little screen for the past fifteen years. In Britain public and commercial have coexisted for decades, with Aunt Beeb, the BBC, so far holding its own and commercial channels subject to strict regulation. In West Germany, whose television system was set up by the British after the war, advertisers are not yet the full masters. France has, however, shown no interest in such cautious transition. The newcomer has become the trend setter, and the trend is unmistakable. The commercial tide is sweeping over Europe, public television is everywhere on the defensive, and the greedy tycoons are beginning to calculate their costs, and future profits, in international terms.

Paradoxically, it was the Socialists who put an end to public television's monopoly. When they took over, in 1981, France had three TV channels. The first, TF 1, drew not quite half the total audience of around 35 million; Antenne 2 accounted for well over a third; and FR 3, the smallest but with regional stations, took care of the rest. All three were financed partly by a license fee charged to each TV owner and partly by advertising, whose proportion to programming was fixed by the government. The Socialists made the

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s correspondent in Europe.*

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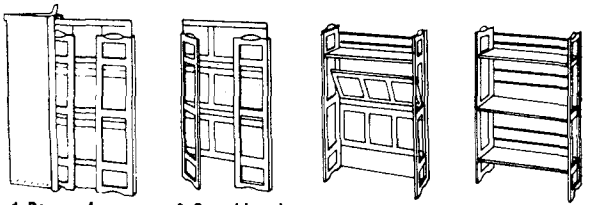

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first breach in 1984, when they set up Canal Plus, a national channel of pay television—much like subscription TV in the States—which can be received only with the aid of an unscrambling device. Its mixture of sports features and recent films, including occasional hard porn in the late hours, has finally proved a financial success, attracting some 2 million customers.

The Socialists, however, had bigger ambitions. Expecting the right to win the parliamentary elections of 1986 and then to hand both public and private television to its friends, François Mitterrand thought it clever to beat the right at its own game by creating a totally commercial channel, and placing it in hands friendly to himself. For funds he looked to the Schlumberger family—to Jerôme Seydoux, the heir in this instance—and for expertise as well as funds, beyond the Alps, to Italy's Silvio Berlusconi, the *supremo* of spaghetti television, a combination of American serials, sports and silly game shows. The fifth channel, La Cinq, was thus born just before the general election. (A sixth, Canal Six, was established at the same time, as a kind of MTV.) La Cinq's charter, by which the state nominally regulates its programming, was effectively a license to show American-made serials and films untroubled by considerations of educational value, minority opinion or quality. French viewers could add *Star Trek* to their weekly diet of *Starsky and Hutch*, and the Socialists could claim that they brought to their country the Western fashion of treating films and plays like sausages, which can be sliced and interspersed at will with advertising.

It was one of those cases where you dirty your hands for no purpose. The right, having won the election that March, proceeded to alter altogether what is known, if you wish to be trendy, as the PAF, or French audiovisual landscape. The new government set up a National Commission for Communications and Liberty, or C.N.C.L., to use again the French abbreviation. This "independent" supervising body at once appointed two political friends of Jacques Chirac, the new Prime Minister, as presidents of Antenne 2 and FR 3, which for the time being remain in public hands. Canal Plus was allowed to continue its own way, but a new deal had to be reached over the fifth channel, which the right had stymied upon taking office by revoking its license to show films. Berlusconi, the Italian, knew the modern meaning of the old Roman saying *pecunia non olet*—"money has no odor," except that of success. The right victorious, it had the prerogative to reshuffle the deck: Berlusconi was asked to share La Cinq not with Seydoux but with Robert Hersant, France's reactionary press lord, a man who, in addition to the virtues of a Hearst or a Murdoch, has the past of an active Nazi collaborator. The C.N.C.L. also turned the sixth channel, which was supposed to be purely musical, into an all-round network, thus further increasing the competition for advertising revenue.

But the C.N.C.L.'s main task was to sell TF 1, the prosperous government-owned network. The commission completed the sale this past April and even managed to recover its mantle of independence in the process. Everybody expected the channel to be taken over by France's publishing octopus, Hachette. It was instead sold to Francis Bouygues, France's international lord of construction and public works, whose annual business exceeds $8 billion. The consortium headed by Bouygues paid roughly $450 million for half the shares of TF 1, the other half being offered mostly to the general public, with 10 percent to the station's employees. Bouygues himself holds half the consortium's shares—that is to say a quarter of the total, and a controlling interest. His main junior partner, controlling 12.5 percent of the total, is, significantly, Robert Maxwell, the British press magnate. The C.N.C.L., incidentally, can now parade its putative independence without any risk. The new master of TF 1 is far from being an enemy of the establishment or of its current rulers.

However, the expert in construction must have assumed that in buying the building he was inheriting the staff as well as the furniture. It was not so simple. The newcomer Hersant thought that La Cinq, which cannot yet be seen throughout the whole of France, must rapidly gain a substantial share of the audience to be credible for advertisers and that this could best be achieved by poaching the most successful shows from his competitors. Comedians and compères were wooed with fat contracts. By the time he realized what was happening, Bouygues found himself with only one major competitive advantage. He set about building an expensive, star-studded news team, which includes, it is worth noting, a trio of women near the very top (Christine Ockrent, for years the main newscaster on Antenne 2; Michèle Cotta, an old-timer in press, radio and TV; and Anne Sinclair, co-host of a popular talk show). In the news area alone the income of star performers is approaching the middle six figures in dollars, which may not be in Dan Rather's class but, allowing for the gap between average French and American salaries, makes announcers here the equivalent of Barbara Walters. The revelation of such exorbitant incomes has, judging by opinion polls, stunned the French public.

The French, it appears, know little about the hefty salaries of their businessmen and care little about the big incomes of film stars or of such international sports figures as Michel Platini, the soccer sorcerer, or Alain Prost, the auto racing ace. They do not have the same indulgence for TV personalities, who are not so distant. These personalities, after all, visit with them every evening at dinnertime. That such veritable cousins, however distinguished, should be getting fifty times their income, often for reading a Teleprompter, came as a shock to French viewers. Admittedly, at the very time when the boost in salaries was causing a scandal here, a snippet in the papers disclosed that the top earners on Wall Street were drawing more than $50 million a year; by those standards even Dan Rather is a poor relation.

In its egalitarianism, the French reaction was interesting, but it missed the most dangerous aspects of the shake-up, which each day become more obvious. Last spring, when they were bidding for channels, the tycoons could talk only of freedom, art and culture. In the fall they are back to profits, which for most remain elusive. The altogether reasonable thought is that France may not have enough advertising to support so much private TV. The expensive

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stars not having carried with them a captive audience, La Cinq is in real financial trouble. But everyone in this game is a gambler, and they all know that whoever wins in the end will win big. For now, the tycoons are united in their aim to deprive the public sector of its relatively meager advertising and, since the government will not increase the license fee, virtually of funds. They also want public television to increase its obligations while they shirk their own. Now when they hear the word "culture," they reach for their computer.

While painting the future black, one should not idealize the past. France's public television was no model. Its main defect was its bald subservience to the government in office. De Gaulle and his successors treated it as "his master's voice." Direct government control over content has loosened in recent years, and the condition of television news cannot get any worse with competition. The second point to keep in mind is that the commercial invasion did not begin only yesterday. With public channels competing for advertising, ratings were already the holy writ and *Dallas* and *Dynasty* the sacred models. The coming change is quantitative rather than qualitative.

Did French TV not produce good shows, plays or documentaries? It obviously did and will. Anymore than with newspapers, books or radio, the problem is not to produce occasional quality wares for the happy few. As a wealthy man once used to keep a ballerina, Britain's commercial TV now keeps a fourth channel with some space for innovation, and the French are already experimenting with a seventh channel, European and cultural. What is at stake is the rule, not the exception. The average person in France spends three and a half hours a day watching the little screen. It is the main source of news and entertainment, the main provider of food for thought. It could be an extraordinary instrument of democracy. The public service preserves, in principle, this potential for education, for enlightenment, for a genuine search for different forms of mass culture. A television geared to the marketplace cannot be bothered by such impediments.

The U.S. pattern of TV must prevail, it is objected, because the Americans are better practitioners. They are. They can put out better soap operas and serials. They have the skilled writers, the slick producers and the huge domestic market. They can, therefore, offer their European customers a more marketable product at a cheaper price. If that were the question, the answer for Europe would lie in a consolidation of resources. But it is not. Nevertheless, consolidation does proceed apace on both sides of the ocean. Scribblers may praise the virtues of small private enterprise, but their bosses are busy amalgamating. Newspapers are being merged, publishers taken over, and finance capital is getting increasingly involved in the media. National giants are looking beyond their frontiers. Berlusconi, after France, is investing in Spanish television. Maxwell is putting money into the French press but also into cables and satellites. So is Rupert Murdoch. Belgium, where you can see several British, French, German and Dutch channels, is a portent of the near future.

In fairness, it must be said that Europeans are also in-

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vading the American media. To note but a few recent examples: Bertelsmann, the big German publisher, took over Doubleday; Collins from Britain now, thanks to Murdoch, owns half of Harper & Row; and though Maxwell failed in his bid for Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, that was not the end of his American ambitions. The nationality of the streamliners is not really so relevant. As Byron put it, in another context, it matters little whether it is "the Jew Rothschild or his fellow Christian Baring." It is, however, symbolic that Rupert Murdoch, the Australian who transited through London, chose to become an American citizen. As they extend their field of operations, the media magnates may tend to move to the heart of the Western empire. In any case, if the Europeans want to resist the dominion of Dallasty, they will not do it through pale imitation.

But, comes the second objection, people get the television they like and deserve. Those who argue this way also call the majority silent when it would be more accurately described as silenced. I am not suggesting that the international masters of the media meet regularly on an island to plot how to turn us all into morons. We must simply acknowledge that commercialism, with its emphasis on the lowest common denominator, tends to bring intellectual preoccupations down to the level of the latest "romance" of Joan Collins or—a question of generation—the color of Madonna's underwear. And this from the Pacific to the Elbe, though not yet to the Urals.

The third objection is more valid. A television, it insists, reflects a social system, and Europe will not be able to escape its American future unless it forges a radically different society. A recent French example confirms this point. Five years ago, after they got into office, the Socialists proclaimed the freedom of the airwaves, abolishing the state's radio monopoly. Optimists assumed that a new era was to begin in broadcasting. Hopes did not last long. The small stations, though numerous, did not dominate without a grass-roots movement. The bigger ones had the backing of established financial interests. A basic principle was reasserted almost at once. In our world, when the distasteful dictatorship of the state is lifted, it is only to be replaced by the naked tyranny of money. God, as usual, was on the side of the big and wealthy battalions. French broadcasting is now dominated by corporations. The FM wavelength in Paris sounds more and more like the one in New York—a bit of freedom and a lot of commercial schmaltz.

Come to think of it, the lesson is not peculiar to Europe. It applies on both sides of the ocean. Here and there, we shall not have a radically different television, or radio or press, unless we do something about society as a whole. This should not prevent us from trying to influence the media, even if we have few illusions about the imminence of the transformation. Meanwhile, dear reader, without illusions but also without complexes, we must find the most convenient position within the cracks in the system, which are far from negligible. Only occasionally, in optimistic mood, can we dream of the day when the chinks and crevices grow big enough to bring the whole system down. J.R. and his universe will be buried in the ruins. □

SOVIET HISTORY–II

A New Revolution In Consciousness

Last week, Dev Murarka described a growing movement among Soviet historians for disinterring the truth about the Stalin and Brezhnev years. This sentiment has been encouraged by Mikhail Gorbachev, who recently called his decision "to expose the faults of previous Soviet leaders" the hardest he had ever made. In April, at a meeting of Soviet historians, the need for candor about the past was re-emphasized. But the backlash among the pro-Stalin establishment scholars was building.

DEV MURARKA

The change in Soviet historians' perspective on the past undoubtedly represents the essence of the psychological revolution that Gorbachev seeks. This was the start of the long-awaited destruction of Stalinism, so necessary if a genuinely new consciousness was to be born. It had already gone far beyond what Khrushchev could attempt. The increasingly apprehensive Stalinists and Brezhnevites sensed this, and some of them chose questions related to Soviet history as the means with which to attack the philosophy and the very foundations of *perestroika*, or restructuring.

Symbolically, the storm burst around Yuri Afanasiev's head. Four historians published a vicious letter in the *Moscow News* of May 17, attacking this remarkably bold and persistently radical fellow scholar. After the rout of the archivist Fyodor Vaganov's line at the meeting of historians on April 29, the Stalinists decided to mobilize conservative elements by going public with their objections to new ideas in history in what amounted to an open letter to Afanasiev. Reactionary thoughts, allied to a conservative outlook, were expressed in such a venomous manner that I felt physically sick after reading it.

The intellectual poverty of the anti-Afanasiev letter was transparent. It avoided crucial points of substance by not addressing itself either to Afanasiev's article in *Kommunist* or his interview in *Sovetskaya Kultura*, both of which criticized the ideological constraints on Soviet historiography. Confining themselves to the published extracts of his inaugural address as rector of the Moscow State Historical Archives Institute, the pen pushers questioned Afanasiev's contention that no interesting work on party or Soviet history had appeared in the past fifteen to twenty years. However, strangely enough, most of the letter consisted of a string of abuse against Trotsky in typical Stalinist terminology.

Dev Murarka, a longtime correspondent in Moscow, is the author of Gorbachov: The Limits of Power, *published in France and due out soon in England and Germany. This is the second installment of a two-part article.*

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Afanasiev pointed out in his scholarly and dignified reply that he had not mentioned Trotsky or Trotskyism in his speech, which was true, and said he resented the insinuation by his critics that he was in sympathy with Trotskyism.

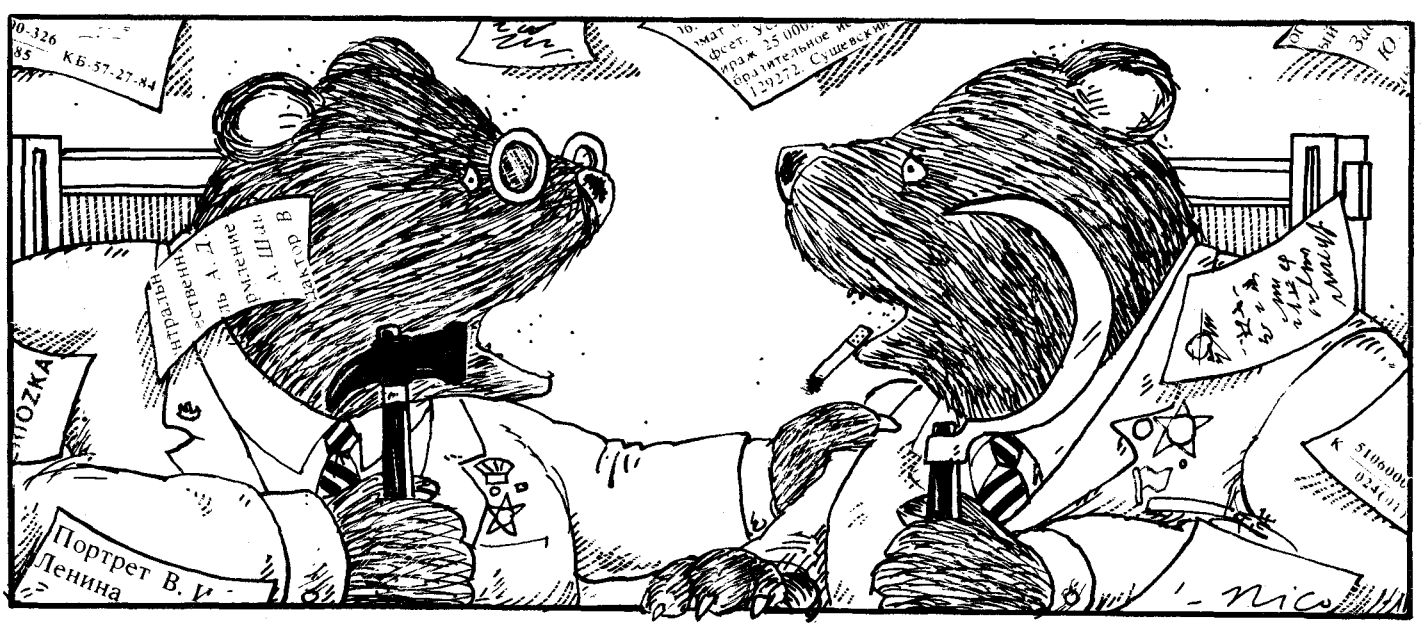
Afanasiev's critics certainly appeared to entertain some exceedingly naïve notions about the outside world's knowledge of this episode of Soviet history. They wrote: "Foreign readers (and *Moscow News* goes to 140 countries) should know about this history of struggle against Trotskyism." They did not seem aware that the "foreign readers" were much better informed about the dispute between Trotsky and Stalin than Russians were. Afanasiev's views had considerable public support, judging from letters to *Moscow News* and *Sovetskaya Kultura*. His critics, of course, were not converted. But they had nothing of substance to add except to accuse him of being incompetent and of demagogy. One of the strangest arguments used against Afanasiev was that offered by a historian from Moscow State University: "The attempts to draw us into discussions about the past can divert us from the tasks of the reconstruction which the party set at its Twenty-seventh Congress and arrest whatever must be decided and done today." An odd view: If historians should not discuss the past, who should? One cannot help wondering about the quality of history taught at Moscow State, where the past cannot be discussed!

Most remarkable, however, was a letter sent by a 57-year-old driver from Penza, Ivan Karasev, to the daily *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria*, a newspaper aimed primarily at the workers. He stated that he was in complete agreement with what was currently happening in the country, except in one respect. He did not agree with the criticism of Stalin and thought him a great man who had defeated the Trotskyists and in whose name people went to battle during the war. He contended: "The name of Stalin should be immortalized, in granite, in bronze, even in gold. It will be an honor for those who were for socialism, who defended socialism during the Great Patriotic War, who rebuilt cities from ruins." The paper pointedly asked Alexander Samsonov, who had earlier attacked Stalin in the March 14-20 *Argumenti i Fakti*, to answer. That was like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut, but Stalin myths remain hard nuts to crack. The 80-year-old Samsonov proceeded to demolish the myths about Stalin, strongly contending that he was neither a military genius nor a great commander and had made many mistakes before and during the war. Samsonov dismissed the contention by Stalinists that de-Stalinization was a personal vendetta of Khrushchev and warned: "It is not possible to overcome inertia, which retards our forward movement, without truth about the past."

It soon became evident that the critique of Stalin's role during the war, exposing the hollowness of his intellectual and moral reputation, was proceeding by political design. An even more devastating demolition of Stalin's reputation as a wartime leader appeared early in June in the mass-circulation monthly *Nauka i Zhizhn* ("Science and Life"), which has a readership of more than 20 million.

It was the most bitter attack yet on Stalin's war record, and it came from an unexpected source, Konstantin Simonov, who died in 1974. Simonov was a distinguished poet and a writer on war themes and had been a correspondent at the front. Even Stalinists could not question his credentials. He was very close to Stalin and won the Stalin Prize five times during the war for his writings, the only author so favored. He knew many of the top generals intimately. Many of his poems of this period, like "Wait for Me," were hugely popular then and have remained so. On April 28, 1965, on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of victory, Simonov delivered a lecture to a joint meeting of the board of the Moscow Writers' Union and Military Literature Union. The text of this lecture was set in type for publication but never appeared; its content remained a closely guarded secret. The stagnant years of Brezhnev had already begun. Now, twenty-two years later, that text was printed. Simonov's widow explained the circumstances of its composition in a foreword and there was a commentary by Samsonov.

Samsonov praised Simonov's courage and acknowledged that historians were only beginning to do now what Simonov had done so precisely twenty-two years before.



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Simonov did not beat around the bush. He declared firmly and unequivocally: "If there had been no 1937, there would have been no summer of 1941."

Simonov thus boldly proclaimed a direct link between the purges of 1937, in the course of which Stalin liquidated most of the military high command and the extreme weakness of the Soviet military when the Nazi onslaught began, in June 1941. The significance of the publication for the general public of this critique of Stalin's wartime role was that the writer Simonov's strictures carried greater weight than those coming from purely academic or political sources. That his text had been written more than two decades before only added to its credibility.

Although neither Afanasiev nor Samsonov mentioned Trotsky by name, their opponents were not altogether wrong in perceiving that the problem of Trotsky had become central not only to the debate about Stalin but to that on current policies. The issue was not the rehabilitation of Trotsky, which was unimportant in itself. The issue was the rejection of Stalin, convincing the people that Stalin's claim that he had inherited and carried forward the Leninist line was fraudulent.

In *Sovetskaya Kultura*, Afanasiev had emphasized that one of the periods needing intensive study was that after Lenin's death, the years 1924 to 1929. Anyone who knew true Soviet history could immediately grasp that during this period one of the main events of political significance was the defeat and exile of Trotsky, which established Stalin's supremacy. Stalin fought in the name of Lenin. Trotsky, whom Anatoly Lunacharsky, the Commissar for Education, described in 1923 as "the second great leader of the Russian Revolution," fought for a large section of the party and for his own policies because he was convinced that they were little different from Lenin's and was confident of his own stature. Stalin was always afraid of Trotsky's influence, and could not rest until he had him murdered. By that time Stalin had already extinguished millions of lives, including nearly all of Trotsky's supporters, real or imaginary. But in defeating Trotsky, and by the means he used, Stalin discredited Leninism. That is not always understood by those who still believe in the myth of Stalin. So powerful is this myth, and so strong are the received sentiments against Trotsky, that it can be changed only very slowly, very cautiously—as the attacks on Afanasiev confirm.

It is essential to grasp the close connection between the destruction of the Stalin legend and *perestroika* in order to follow and understand the policies of Gorbachev. He has contended that a material revolution cannot come about without a psychological one, which is even more necessary in the long run. He has often spoken of the urgent need for changing the consciousness of the people. This has to be a powerful yet subtle process. It cannot simply be imposed. It requires persuasive argument. Any kind of crudity or haste could be damaging to Gorbachev and paralyze the regeneration of society now under way. The essential thing is that the whole set of value systems in ideology, economy, history, philosophy and sociology that Joseph Stalin imposed on the Soviet Union should be either destroyed or drastically modified. Without this there can be no beneficial, lasting or meaningful reconstruction of the system. Gorbachev could begin to do this only after the plenum of the Central Committee this past January.

Following the next plenum of the Central Committee, on June 25-26, from which Gorbachev emerged even stronger politically than before, the drive for de-Stalinization took a sharper turn. The plenum had barely concluded its deliberations when the mass-circulation illustrated weekly *Ogonyok* came out with a long article by Vasily Polikarpov, a military historian, about the sad fate of Fyodor Raskolnikov, a victim of Stalin, who died in self-imposed exile in France on September 12, 1939. He was declared "an enemy of the people" by Stalin and ever afterward branded a Trotskyist, though he was not one at all. He was simply a highly intelligent military commander, diplomat and man of letters. The article accepted and affirmed this, quoting Raskolnikov's firm denial of being in sympathy with Trotsky.

Raskolnikov's letter to Stalin, written on August 17, 1939, was published in the Russian émigré press in France at the time but in the Soviet Union was known to only a few people. Made available to the Soviet public for the first time by *Ogonyok*, it was a remarkably truthful and savage account of Stalin's terror. Raskolnikov's catalogue of Stalin's cruelty was endless. He named scores of artists, writers, critics, scientists and engineers whom Stalin had destroyed. He accused Stalin of walking through pools of the blood of murdered former comrades, dirtying Soviet literature and arts, and of falsifying party history.

Raskolnikov had been rehabilitated following the Twentieth Party Congress, in 1956, and after an investigation he was cleared of all charges, in 1963. But in 1965, following the Brezhnev coup, he had again become an unmentionable. Now his name was being dramatically restored to the list of heroes. Even more remarkable, Polikarpov remarked that Sergei Trapeznikov might just as well have accused Stalin himself of being a Trotskyist. He quoted the dictator's own words praising Trotsky "for all the organizational work for the [October 1917] uprising." This was the first time in decades that a positive appraisal of Trotsky had appeared in print anywhere in the Soviet Union, and by Stalin, no less! It was said that Khrushchev once quoted those remarks, but even he dared not allow the text to be printed.

In his letter to Stalin, Raskolnikov had angrily apostrophized the tyrant: "Your stupid bacchanalia cannot continue for long. So unending is the list of your crimes, it is not possible to count them. Sooner or later the Soviet people will take you to the bench where the accused sit, as a traitor to socialism and revolution, as the main wrecker, the true enemy of the people, the organizer of the famine and forgeries at trials." As Polikarpov summed up in his *Ogonyok* article: "We are only now in the process of restructuring in social life, finding or discovering stagnation and dogmatism in human sciences, the arts. The letter of Raskolnikov provides an opportunity to trace the evolution of these phenomena, to find their roots."

Gorbachev himself gave a symbolic boost to the anti-Stalin campaign by making a significant personal gesture.

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On July 1 he donated 50,000 rubles, a part of the foreign royalties from his books, to the newly established Cultural Fund. The donation was earmarked for a monument in Smolensk to Vasily Tyorkin, a fictional and highly popular hero of World War II created by Alexander Tvardovsky, poet and much-loved editor of the literary magazine *Novy Mir* in the 1960s. Tvardovsky had spearheaded the drive against Stalin during the thaw under Khrushchev and had published Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Gorbachev's gift appealed to many strata of contemporary Soviet society, for different reasons.

On July 4, *Sovetskaya Kultura* came out with an article by Genrikh Volkov, with the provocative title "Shall We Become Mankurts?" This renewed the great debate about truthful writing of history, which had occupied the foreground of the restructuring process and reforms being carried out under the Gorbachev leadership since the January plenum.

The devastating nature of the question can be grasped only if one understands the meaning of the expression "mankurt." The word refers to a practice of the Juan-juan tribe, which ruled Mongolia and a large part of the adjacent territory in the fifth and sixth centuries. They used to tie the hands of their prisoners of war and put a camel skin cap soaked in water on their heads. The cap was worn continuously for about two months, shrinking all the while. Reputedly, the increasing pressure damaged the brain of the wearer in such a way that memory and willpower were permanently destroyed, making a willing slave ever afterward, a mankurt.

The article by Volkov was preceded by a critique of Afanasiev by Professor Vaganov and Anatoly Ponomarev. (Vaganov had organized the writing of the letter attacking Afanasiev in the May issue of *Moscow News*.) The two criticized Afanasiev for labeling it an urgent task to rethink Communist Party and Soviet history. They charged that Afanasiev appeared to advocate the consideration of other models of socialism. What impudence!

Vaganov and Ponomarev said that the work of Soviet historians was already done; there was nothing new to add and social scientists should leave their studies for a time and visit farms and factories to get the feel of real life. Shades of Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution! It seemed that the Stalinists, like the Bourbons, were incapable of learning from life. Volkov's reply in *Sovetskaya Kultura* was sarcastic: "Of course this is a position, and from this position there is no need for restructuring in historical sciences. For the historians all that remains is to visit collective and state farms and factories."

A few days later, a fierce attack was launched on the two by Polikarpov, also in *Sovetskaya Kultura*. He provided some details on developments in the field of history during the past fifteen years that had made them years of shame for the Soviet social sciences. He strongly objected to Vaganov and Ponomarev's insinuations that Afanasiev had taken an anti-Marxist position. He asked, What were they afraid of? Was it the possibility that new interpretations of the theoretical ideas of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, different from those postulated in 1938, would be found?

Later, the editor of *Sovetskaya Kultura*, Albert Belyaev, revealed that while many readers had written to support Afanasiev, only Vaganov and Ponomarev had criticized him. The most remarkable aspect of the debate sparked off by Afanasiev months before was the way it mesmerized the intelligentsia. Passion had returned to Soviet historians. Not the passion for denunciation, falsification and hatred that had marked the beginnings of Stalinist historiography and later become routine but a passion for truth, for clarification and enlightenment. A deluge of revelations about Stalin's horrible misdeeds was engulfing the consciousness of the people and cleansing it. The names of Nikolai Bukharin, Trotsky and other stigmatized figures of Soviet history began to appear more and more frequently in the media, without epithets. For instance, in a July 12 *Izvestia* article about the first government formed after the October Revolution, Yegor Yakovlev, the editor in chief of *Moscow News*, provided a complete list of its members, including Trotsky, and brief sketches of their careers. The article maintained that all of them had made many mistakes, including Lenin. That was indeed a new note, because Lenin is considered sacrosanct.

Not everyone can grasp in equal measure the significance of all this new information being spread on a mass scale. But no one can remain indifferent to it either. It arouses interest, starts arguments and debates. In science fiction there are time machines in which anyone can travel back to the past, but most people dare not face it. *Perestroika* is turning out to be something of a time machine for Soviet history.

A graphic example of this process was the official exhibition of contemporary Soviet painting in Moscow in May, coinciding with the Congress of the Artists. A large canvas was on display that was a startling contrast to the reactionary tone of the congress itself. Called *Father*, it was painted by Dmitry Zhilinsky. On the frame, in big gold letters, is written: "Dedicated to the innocent dead at the time of repression 1937." The painting shows a room. At the door a policeman is standing with his back to the room. Near the door hangs a wall calendar opened on the date October 20. Two terrified boys are sitting on a cot on one side. In another corner a woman is sitting on a bed in her nightdress. A pillow has fallen on the floor. In one part of the room another policeman is bending down, going through some books and papers strewn on the floor. Near him, an old woman is standing and watching the whole scene with dismay. In the middle of the room, a third policeman is frisking a man of about 40, also in his nightclothes. Under the painting, in a small black frame, there was a copy of the judgment by the military tribunal, dated August 10, 1957, declaring that Dmitry Zhilinsky, who was sentenced to death by a military tribunal on October 10, 1938, has been posthumously rehabilitated. It was the only painting around which crowds gathered. A vase, placed on the floor underneath, was kept replenished with fresh flowers brought in by the public.

If all this, and much more that is currently happening in the Soviet Union, is not recognized as a sign of the changing consciousness of the people, then what should be? □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Natural Bonds

JOHN POWERS

THE CHILD IN TIME. *By Ian McEwan. Houghton Mifflin. 263 pp. $16.95.*

The Child in Time is, at 263 pages, Ian McEwan's *War and Peace*. Longer and richer than his earlier work, this new novel interweaves private sorrow and public policy in hopes of capturing the mystery of time. McEwan has moved away from the queasy, somewhat callow preoccupations that made his name, and he now stands our image of him on its head. No longer is he the fresh-faced fellow caught in the early jacket photo, the young man with shoulder-length hair, a floral vest and wire-rimmed glasses; he appears today as a solid citizen, with a discreet fringe, a careful expression and the tweed jacket of the certified man of letters. All that remains of the earlier McEwan are those austere spectacles, which give him the ruthless precision of vision for which he has always been known.

When he published *First Love, Last Rites* back in 1975, the British reviewers responded with a rapture that was all the greater for being mixed with relief. Here, at long last, was the young writer to cut English fiction free from the drab Drabbles, the treadmill Murdochs, the Kingsley Amis novels rowdy with drunk scenes. Formally polished and crawling with nastiness—incest, pickled penises, child molestation, murder—McEwan's slim book of stories created a world pregnant with isolation and pain. He wrote about the nightmare of private life from the inside, revealing a knack for the memorably unpleasant detail: The child-molesting narrator of "Butterflies" attempts to wash the semen from his hand only to discover that "it stuck to my fingers like scum. I picked it off in bits." Sensational in content, *First Love, Last Rites* became a sensation, winning the Somerset Maugham Award and establishing McEwan, at least momentarily, as the leading writer of his generation.

He consolidated this position with *In Between the Sheets* (1979), another shocking collection, and *The Cement Garden* (1978), narrated by a teen-ager named Jack, one of the most ferocious and haggard masturbators in literary history. This compelling first novel revealed McEwan's impeccable ear for the voice of hormone-racked adolescence and expanded his work's emotional range. Although decked out with "spots," squished frogs and joyless wanks—the finery of his art—*The Cement Garden* is far from ghastly: It shows how a group of siblings reconstitute a new kind of family after the death of their parents. Like grass growing in the cracks of a concrete garden, Jack breaks free of his narcissistic shell in an oddly affirmative act of incest.

With these three books—all nasty, British and short, as the old joke has it—McEwan had defined a style that was very influential (cf. Martin Amis's *Other People*, Iain Banks's *The Wasp Factory*) and fit neatly into a tradition of ruthlessly rendered meanness that is as recognizably English as glorified naïveté is American. His work even had the virtue of offending the right people: An adaptation of his story "Solid Geometry" was banned by the BBC.

Like *The Cement Garden*, his finest stories ("Homemade," "Solid Geometry," "In Between the Sheets," "Psychopolis") have an unsettling visceral power, not least because they envision sexual life as a site and source of disease, decay, death. If the quintessential McEwan climax was an act of unnatural sex, preferably incest, the governing metaphor was that of tossing oneself off, a fruitless spilling of seed, sex as solipsism. "The impossibility of knowing or feeling anything for certain gave me a great urge to masturbate," says Jack in *The Cement Garden*.

Yet for all McEwan's obvious gifts there was something about his early work that did not inspire confidence, possibly its penchant for morbid tour de force. Must every narrator be an ape, pornographer or screwer of mannequins? One wondered if McEwan dwelt imaginatively within these self-contained worlds because he, too, felt it impossible to know or feel anything for certain. Perhaps his work was creepy and nothing more. Would his limitations grow obvious with time?

McEwan's second novel, *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981), seemed to suggest that the answer was yes. This story of a vacationing couple in a sinister city was not only portentous and derivative—imagine Nicolas Roeg's *Don't Look Now* filmed underwater—it lacked his usual urgency. Focusing on strangely affectless protagonists (as psychically vacant as his first characters were overrun), the novel offers wispy hints of ideas about feminism and domination, but only comes alive when the city unveils its malevolence and a sadistic bogeyman slits the hero's wrists. What a high point! *The Comfort of Strangers* was so bummed-out and wan that many readers, especially Americans, suspected that McEwan had reached an artistic dead-end.

There has always been, however, another side to his work, one obscured by his fiction's dedication to bent private worlds. This politically active McEwan has found expression in his many scripts and teleplays (probably because screenwriting, unlike fiction, all but demands the creation of a public reality). Much of his TV and film work is charged with political consciousness, be it the feminist angle on wartime life in *The Imitation Game* (a BBC "Play for Today"), or his anatomy of Thatcher-era Britain in Richard Eyre's film *The Ploughman's Lunch*, a lethal, beautifully observed anatomy of media culture. Ad men, Conservative pols, progressive historians, hustling media scum—McEwan skewers them all, and shows how English society rewards their bad faith. While ordinary folk eat their "ploughman's lunch" (a bogus traditional meal dreamed up by a P.R. man), the elite drink good wine in pricey restaurants with imported chefs.

The Child in Time also begins in the public realm. Stephen Lewis, a celebrated children's book writer, heads to a meeting of a subcommittee of the Official Commission on Child Care, created by a Thatcher-like Prime Minister. Yet as he sits feigning alertness in the committee (whose machinations unfold through the novel), we discover that, like earlier McEwan protagonists, Stephen is haunted by a private sense of loss. His 3-year-old daughter, Kate, was snatched at a South London supermarket—a memory that spools through his

John Powers is the film critic for the L.A. Weekly.

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mind with the teasing vagueness of assassination footage.

Terrible moments are common in McEwan, but this one carries a different valence, for he reverses his usual perception of things. Rather than building up to Kate's snatching, making it the climax, *The Child in Time* starts where *The Comfort of Strangers* stops, with its survivors trying to live through a horrible event. And the characters are not McEwan's usual suspects. Far from inhabiting the kidnapper's point of view, McEwan—now married and the father of four—shows this extraordinary event's effect on its everyday victims, parents whose thoughts return to their psychic wound as the brain registers the twinges of a missing limb.

Stephen and his wife, Julie, are torn apart by their loss, discovering that "their sorrows were separate, insular, incommunicable." She withdraws, first into herself, later to a retreat in the Chilterns; he throws himself into searching for Kate, into booze, into committee work, into his friendship with Charles Darke, his publisher-turned-Conservative politician. Charles is married, handily enough, to a physicist whose discussions of relativity feed Stephen's (and McEwan's) fascination with the multiplicities of times within time. McEwan evokes the drawn-out seconds of a car crash, the infinitely interpretable slow-motion of Kate's disappearance, the "commonplace of irreversible time" found in physical aging and, most dramatically, the dazzling time-slip that produces one of this novel's highest highs: Staring through a black hole, Stephen actually sees the pivotal moment of his parent's courtship.

McEwan has always had a keen eye for intimacy's knots and curlicues, and he evokes all of Stephen's personal feelings and relationships with a lucid intelligence attuned to the workings of history, both social and familial. (His vigilant prose reminds us that, American minimalism notwithstanding, one can be spare without sacrificing social precision or emotional depth.) Stephen's story gives McEwan's work a new resonance, for it turns not on *frissons* but on the frailty of our deepest bonds—how a beloved child can disappear forever, how an estranged couple's momentary act of love can suddenly collapse into a heap of gnawing regrets, how easily children let their parents "slip away with their lives forgotten." In revealing these bleak truths, McEwan's alertness never falters.

If anything, his wits are too much about him. *The Child in Time* is often contrived or too tightly wound, as when Charles's nervous breakdown conveniently makes him regress to childhood; as when Stephen's parents meet at a department store, where his father is returning a broken clock. At the same time, the book's political subplot, though strongly felt, seems a bit tacked on. McEwan makes it clear that Thatcherism (or, more accurately, its near-future avatar) hates democracy and acts accordingly, dismantling the welfare state's services, making a fetish of secrecy and back-room decisions, redefining everything, even childhood, in its own reactionary terms.

McEwan wittily conjures up the government's "Authorized Child-Care Handbook," opening each chapter with snippets from this tome:

> "The promise of chocolate in return for, say, good bedtime behavior is, on balance, worth the minor damage to teeth which will in any case soon replace themselves. . . . Incentives, after all, form the basis of our economic structure and necessarily shape our morality; there is no reason on earth why a well-behaved child should not have an ulterior motive."

Clever stuff, this, and connected to McEwan's larger ideas about Conservative Britain's rending of natural bonds. "The art of bad government," Stephen thinks, "was to sever the line between public policy and intimate feeling, the instinct for what was right." Though McEwan finds ways to support this conclusion (rather reminiscent of Orwell), he doesn't quite give his political theme a satisfying payoff. Despite some local successes, the book's portrait of Thatcherism dilutes Stephen's story even as it expands it.

The book ends with a hard-earned but frustrating affirmation: A child is born, redeeming the past and showing Stephen that "all the sorrow, all the empty waiting, had been enclosed within meaningful time, within the richest unfolding conceivable." Although McEwan renders this birth unsentimentally and offers something that looks like wisdom—life replenishes life, wounds are healed by time and nature—his conclusion will prove disappointing, I suspect, even for those without radical temperaments. This contrived nativity scene has a patriarchal stolidity that keeps it from being fresh or especially illuminating. The aspidistra, one might say, is still flying high.

There's nothing special about McEwan's discovery of life's regenerative power—nonintellectuals have known about it for millennia. Raised to a feeling of alienation, modern writers generally discover these home truths only when they grow older, get married or form other long-term bonds, engender children and develop, through all this, a sense of care for the future. To judge from its recent books, this has happened with McEwan's literary generation. Even London's naughtiest writers have gotten into the act (at least for a while). Earlier this year, Julian Barnes produced his most overtly serious novel, the flat, overpraised *Staring at the Sun*, which celebrated life's "ordinary miracles." Martin Amis, too, has recently shaken off some of his adolescent snottiness and gotten, well, fatherly. Sometime in 1986 it dawned on him that nuclear war would be bad for children and other living things, and so, in *Einstein's Monsters* and a recent *Esquire* article, he has begun assailing nuke-think with the fervor of a reformed smoker entering a John Player factory.

One needn't be completely suspicious of Barnes's and Amis's seriousness to have more faith in McEwan's artistic instincts. For, unlike these peers (who are addicted to urbanity), all his work is suffused with a genuine sense of human sadness and suffering; it is informed by a more consistent sense of responsibility, a deeper and more coherent political awareness, one that is still growing.

The Child in Time must be seen and judged as a transitional work. In its culminating childbirth, "this matter of life loving itself," McEwan has pushed beyond the sterility, masturbation and solipsism that once featured so prominently in his fiction; he has cast his lot with creation, with adulthood, ordinary life and political concern. For one of his reputation, it's a risky move—and, I think, the right one. Although *The Child in Time* has its flaws, no one should ask Ian McEwan to go back to the world of his early fiction, where teen-agers' sticky fingers smell like rotten meat and sad child-molesters lure girls to their doom with the promise of butterflies just under the bridge. □

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Prisoners of Tenure

CASEY BLAKE

THE LAST INTELLECTUALS: American Culture in the Age of Academe. *By Russell Jacoby. Basic. 209 pp. $18.95.*

Thirty-five years ago, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* would have been the center of a debate in the pages of *Partisan Review*, which did in fact address many of the same issues in its 1952 series "Our Country and Our Culture." Today, there exists no successor to *Partisan Review* as a forum for discussions of the intellectual's vocation and its relation to liberal and leftist politics, only a host of specialized journals guarding their own pieces of academic turf. To make any mark on a wider reading public requires a book, plus a publisher willing to solicit the necessary blurbs, advertise in all the right places and get copies into university bookstores across the country. Without the intensely focused debates in bohemian quarters and journals of public opinion, authors must rely on the marketing apparatus of an academic culture to make themselves heard.

In Russell Jacoby's case, in particular, this is a pity. His passion, wit and spiteful intelligence are the stuff of the well-crafted essay, and his subjects—the academic monopoly on American thought and culture, the absence of a younger generation of radical intellectuals—would be better served in essay form. Jacoby's writing is full of aphorisms and sharply worded dismissals of thinkers and theories that usually command immediate assent, if not reverence. All of these qualities serve Jacoby well as an essayist; both an earlier version of his argument printed in a 1983 *Dissent* and an excerpt from his book that appeared recently in these pages raise questions that leave the reader eager to carry on the discussion, even at high volume.

The Last Intellectuals, by contrast, is simultaneously too much and too little. Too much because Jacoby's style grows a bit wearisome after 200 pages and because his critique of the New Left–inspired academics degenerates into scolding as he makes his own long march through the disciplines. Too little because the publication of a critical manifesto as a book promises a degree of historical analysis and comprehensiveness that Jacoby cannot deliver.

At book length he seems obliged to document his charge that the academy has swallowed up a generation of thinkers, leaving an important hole in American culture. According to Jacoby, no successors have emerged to take the place of figures such as Daniel Bell, Alfred Kazin, John Kenneth Galbraith, Jane Jacobs and Gore Vidal as intellectuals committed to "a public world—and a public language, the vernacular." To prove that New Left academics play no comparable role, Jacoby brings forth examples of unreadable prose from one discipline after another. In the process, he weighs down his own argument with footnotes and quotations from other critics (including, I should admit, this reviewer) who have made a similar point. As he moves from philosophy to political science to sociology, economics, history, literary theory and even radical geography, his refrain becomes all too familiar. Without exception, the New Left's embrace of the academy has resulted in the marginalization of critical discourse and the building of academic empires: "In the end it was not the New Left intellectuals who invaded the universities but the reverse: the academic idiom, concepts, and concerns occupied, and finally preoccupied, young left intellectuals."

Jacoby is at his best when speaking in his own voice on recent trends in American culture. His discussions of the intellectual consequences of suburbanization and gentrification are superb, as are his original observations on the legendary—and to Jacoby's mind, overrated—"New York intellectuals." Still, the demands of the extended monograph wear Jacoby and his readers down. It's not just the footnotes and citations that cause trouble; even his aphoristic punch turns against him when employed so often. "While the aging industrial plant of America elicits much talk," he complains, "the aging intellectual plant passes unnoticed"—a nice touch, and a good way to introduce his subject, on page nine. But the inversion of Marx's "theory of fetishism" into the "fetishism of theory" on page 173, after so many other comparable wordplays, has Jacoby rhyming and ranting like a highbrow rap musician.

Then too, the repetition of his case against New Left intellectuals leaves Jacoby vulnerable to the unfair charge that his book is the embittered screed of an academic denied tenure. He intends to inspire and resuscitate his flagging generation of academic leftists and not only to detail their fallen condition. From the outset, Jacoby explains that his critique "does not malign individuals. It is not a statement about personal integrity or genius; nor does it depend on any particular writers or artists." Fair enough, but by the time we get to chapters five and six, the mood of the book sours. "One thousand radical sociologists, but no Mills," he charges, as if waving a list of the ivory-tower offenders; "three hundred critical literary theorists but no Wilson; scads of Marxist economists but no Sweezy or Braverman; urban critics galore but no Mumford or Jacobs."

By the same token, *The Last Intellectuals* is not long or detailed enough to analyze the question at its core, namely, the divorce of the "missing" generation of young American intellectuals from any larger dialogue. While he is right to note the academicism of intellectual life, he also needs to explore other developments that have undermined a public culture, in particular the disappearance of a liberal intelligentsia and a liberal political culture outside of intellectual circles. Just compare *The New Republic* of the 1920s and 1930s with its newly Republican namesake in the 1980s, if you have any doubt about the dwindling public space claimed by liberals, let alone the radicals and Marxists who absorb Jacoby's attention. Nor does Jacoby have anything at all to say about the social history of religious intellectuals or black intellectuals, two subjects that would deepen his argument about the ways in which the university has narrowed the boundaries of public discourse. The recent history of American feminist intellectuals is also missing here, and one wonders if writers like Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, Barbara Ehrenreich and Lillian Rubin are really as isolated from a nonacademic audience as the other leftists he mentions. My hunch is that they aren't,

Casey Blake teaches American history at Indiana University and is completing a book about Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank and Lewis Mumford.

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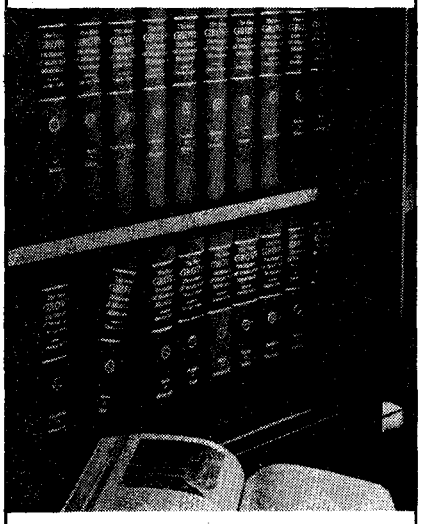

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precisely because the women's movement still has an existence outside of academic programs in women's studies. At the very least, Jacoby owes his readers a more thorough, and more careful, treatment of the histories of the professions and the university itself. Too often, he simply asserts that they are the enemies of critical thinking and plain speaking. It's not enough to argue that the culture of the university always presents a "study in total depravity," as Thorstein Veblen called it in his original subtitle to *The Higher Learning in America*. We need to know far more about the historical origins of this deplorable situation than is provided in *The Last Intellectuals*.

Given these shortcomings, Jacoby's book is likely to come under fire from many quarters. Many will no doubt locate its gravest weakness in the author's belief that some aspects of American cultural life were healthier in the past than they are now. So, if all else fails, Jacoby can be portrayed as a grouchy nostalgic, the Allan Bloom of the left. He has failed to grasp even the most elementary principle of American culture in the 1980s, as preached by free-market economists, post-structuralist literary theorists, post-modern architects and computer scientists: that there's no turning back.

Still, it would be tragic if Jacoby's argument were ignored. *The Last Intellectuals* champions and at times exemplifies a kind of public rhetoric and intelligence that once stood at the center of liberal and leftist thought in this country. Jacoby's stance as a radical critic of academic specialization owes a great deal to the three very American radicals he defends in this book: Thorstein Veblen, Lewis Mumford and C. Wright Mills. All three resist easy characterization. Their work is not Marxist but radical, at times populist. Veblen, Mumford and Mills wrote in a craggy, cranky and purely American idiom that sought to update their country's civic republicanism and make it serve the twentieth century as a language of protest and democratic renewal. Yet, at the same time, all three critics held intellectuals (and even engineers, in Veblen's case) responsible for the creation of an oppositional political culture. Jacoby's polemic continues their fierce commitment to a native radicalism and it restates their brief for a prophetic role for public intellectuals, who speak with and for other Americans.

What is especially refreshing about *The Last Intellectuals* is its skepticism about the radicalism of the avant-garde. Despite his scorn for academic New Leftists, Jacoby has no illusions about the bohemian cult of alienation that mesmerized their predecessors. Along with everyone else, he misses the cheap rents in bohemia, but he knows better than to celebrate it as a lost counterculture. Like Malcolm Cowley in the 1930s, and scores of critics since, he cannot miss the role played by the cult of Greenwich Village in re-establishing bourgeois culture as a menu of mass consumption and life-style choices. As far as the most famous of the American avant-garde intellectuals are concerned, Jacoby reverses the usual argument that the marginality of New York City's Jewish-American intelligentsia was the key to its radicalization in the 1930s. Their radicalism was only a moment's flirtation. With some exceptions, the most hardy American radicals have been thinkers with roots in their country's own radical traditions. "Personal alienation," Jacoby writes, "does not engender a hardy radicalism. The angst that expresses the pain of separation also craves union—or its substitute, recognition and acceptance. The social critique founded solely on alienation also founders on it."

With the old verities of alienation and bohemia thus discredited, and with the university cast as the enemy of a public culture, Jacoby has very little room to maneuver. At times, he suggests that a return to the world of the "little magazine" is in order, but here he minimizes the precariousness of such enterprises even in the heyday of those publications, let alone today. All such magazines have had to rely on angels, who have sometimes been as venal and capricious as even the worst tenure-and-promotion committee. Jacoby points to *The Seven Arts* (1916-17) as an example of the kind of public periodical that has given way to the scholarly journal, but he doesn't mention that this premiere forum for American cultural criticism folded after less than a year of publication, when its benefactor pulled the plug over the appearance of antiwar essays by Randolph Bourne and John Reed. The subsequent history of the important twentieth-century journals of culture and politics is equally depressing. Angels turn to devils, trust funds run out, magazines go under or are subsidized and reorganized by universities—or, in the case of

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neoconservative journals, by corporations. Jacoby has run head-on into the crisis of patronage in advanced capitalist societies that has plagued all twentieth-century writers, artists and independent intellectuals. Without legitimate institutions of support, such people may disappear, even as the culture becomes glutted with words, images and monographs.

Yet the institutional arrangements of modern patronage alone do not explain the waning of public culture, nor does the proclivity of New Left intellectuals for specialized jargon and meta-theory. The public intellectuals whom Jacoby admires—Veblen, Mumford and Mills—were able to address a wider audience because their readers spoke, read and argued in a fairly coherent moral and political language, the language, for better or worse, of modern liberalism. Whatever its limitations, twentieth-century liberalism created a rich public culture of churchgoers, social workers, artists, teachers, union members and civil servants that is now in a state of virtual collapse. Its geographical and intellectual universe was bounded by the world of mostly native-born social planners (the old New School and the old *New Republic*) on one end and the world of cultural radicals and immigrant outsiders (the two Villages, Greenwich and East) on the other. The public culture of liberalism was not only a New York City phenomenon, either, as any glance at maps of electoral returns will tell you. If anything, it was hardier in parts of the Midwest than in much of metropolitan New York. For all intents and purposes, the cultural and political landscape of liberalism has disappeared. Without its ongoing conversations, without its structures of everyday experience and personal contacts, the native radicalism of a Mills makes no sense.

The radicalism Jacoby admires needs to be rooted in a wider liberal culture, if only as a point of departure for a critique of liberal premises. Those left academics teaching politics and history in the 1980s know that the cultural chasm that divides them from their students is not a result merely of their own specialization. To pick only one example, the New Left's critique of "corporate liberalism" has no meaning for young Americans living in an illiberal culture. Students wonder about the strange specimen in front of them. Why is their professor so incensed that Roosevelt rehabilitated capitalism? "Isn't that what Presidents should do?" they ask. What other criteria could possibly be used to judge a President's actions?

Jacoby claims that "a specter haunts American universities or, at least, its faculties: boredom." Those who entered the academy believing they were boring from within are now just boring. But the problem cuts deeper than that, and there's more at stake in Jacoby's analysis than he himself allows. The isolation of intellectual radicalism, its hasty retreat into the academy as the 1960s wore on into the 1970s and 1980s, is part of a far more troubling pattern. A vigorous, argumentative conversation held in the open air for decades—at least since Veblen's time—seems to be ending, and nothing (not even what passes now for conservatism) has taken its place. At one point, Jacoby might have joined in that conversation, adding his voice to the discussions in journals that printed serious work in the vernacular. Today, to be heard above the din of conference gossip and discourse about discourse, Jacoby has to shout, and sometimes to wail. Those who don't mind his pitch and timbre would do well to listen—and then yell right back. □

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The Lenore Marshall Prize

The Lenore Marshall/Nation Poetry Prize of $10,000, awarded annually for an outstanding book of poems published in the United States, is sponsored by the New Hope Foundation in conjunction with The Nation. *Previous winners of the prize have been Howard Moss (1985), John Ashbery (1984), Josephine Miles (1983), George Starbuck (1982), John Logan (1981), Sterling A. Brown (1980), Stanley Kunitz (1979), Hayden Carruth (1978), Allen Tate (1977), Philip Levine (1976), Denise Levertov (1975) and Cid Corman (1974).*

This year the prize has been awarded to Donald Hall for his book The Happy Man *(Random House). The judges were Douglas Crase, Ellen Bryant Voigt and Robert Pinsky, who has contributed the accompanying essay.*

The judges for the Lenore Marshall Prize selected Donald Hall's *The Happy Man* unanimously, from among nearly 200 books published in 1986. This book is the ninth collection of poetry by a distinguished American writer whose first volume, *Exiles and Marriages*, won the Lamont Prize thirty-two years ago.

Hall is a member of the large, diverse group of gifted American poets born around 1928, an impressive list that includes James Merrill and Allen Ginsberg, Adrienne Rich and Philip Levine, John Ashbery and James Wright, Richard Howard and Frank O'Hara, John Hollander and Anne Sexton. As my arbitrary examples suggest, the group is as hard to generalize about as it is distinguished. What these strong individuals seem to share is that they became poets in the postwar years when the triumphs of the Frost-Pound-Eliot-Stevens generation were clear and complete. Their various, distinct individuality could be seen as expressing the freedom or need to revise those modernist triumphs, or turn them inside out. Hall, in his rhythms and in his deliberate tuning down of the New England landscape, away from extremes of transcendence and despair and toward something like a contemporary domestic scale, sometimes seems in loving dialectic with Frost.

That is one way to approach the particular eloquence of *The Happy Man* and its characteristic, penetrating emotion: the feeling that happiness is relative and must inhere in daily life along with pain and labor, or else nowhere. This is a silvery, shadowed and qualified emotional terrain, and Hall's art is to give it size, weight and immediacy, beginning with the first images of the first poem, "Great Day in the Cows' House":

> In the dark tie-up seven huge
> Holsteins
> lower their heads to feed, chained
> loosely to old saplings
> with whitewashed bark still on them.
> They are long dead; they survive, in
> the great day
> that cancels the successiveness of
> creatures.
> Now she stretches her wrinkly neck,
> her turnip-eye
> rolls in her skull, she sucks up
> breath.

These lines celebrate the mystery inside what is partial and quotidian rather than absolute and extraordinary, with the oblique, contradictory celebration of things and movements: we see in the dark; the saplings are old, though saplings, but they retain their bark; the animals are chained, but loosely; they are dead, but they survive, just as turnip-eye sounds both dead and insistently alive. And this qualified, midway quality of the things permeates the movement, too, as it shifts from the particular huge animals and their highly specified tie-up to the self-amending generalities and abstractions of the second sentence, abstractions that tap their way through semicolon and comma. Then the third sentence returns to the particular—"Now" and "she"—more specified and vital than ever, but with the odor of limitation and canceling death over all. The language itself sheds a sad comic glow in which all things must acknowledge that they are also something else, the accepting humor of the stoic: "Moos of revenant cattle/shake ancient timbers and timbers still damp with sap."

The first section of *The Happy Man* embodies the book's theme in the relentless cycles of farm life, the New Hampshire stringencies Hall has written about in his classic prose memoir *String Too Short to Be Saved*. New England seasons and habits, shifts of survival and decay, present the measured, surprisingly generous grounds for life. The second section of the volume is more direct and personal, presenting the same sense of things in a single narrative and meditative poem, "Shrubs Burned Away," actually the free-standing first third of a projected longer work.

This poem makes explicit the world of contemporary social concerns and histories, from world war to the All-Nite Laundro-Mart, the kind of experience that implicitly colors the bucolic material of the first section. At first, the theme seems merely to be failure and pathos. A man works at a lumberyard job he hates, "bullied, found wanting," and drives home weeping to shake his fist over his infant's cradle, with the ironic, futile words "he'll do/what he wants to do!" A gifted young woman loses track of her painting in family obligations. A marriage fails. But against or in this chain of narrative, potentially the stuff of TV serials, Hall's lines establish the quiet but nearly manic relish for life that makes us desire to live through our quite possibly calamitous episodes.

That relish is represented in the poem by the act of building, the inward act that constructs the cozy, flawed house of ourselves that we make by living:

> At the exact millisecond when two
> cells fused
> and multiplied, I started this house.
> Through years
> of milk and potty I constructed
> foundations. In Miss Ford's
> classroom I built it; in vacant lots
> hopeless at football,
> by Blake's Pond hunting for frogs
> and turtles,
> under the leaf's breath, in rotted
> leaves I built it;
> in months at the worktable assembling
> model airplanes,
> at the blackboard doing sums, in blue
> summer
> painting watercolors at my grand-
> mother's I built this house.
> I build it now, staring at the
> wrist-knuckle.

This is not optimism, exactly, but rather whatever human tone it is that turns the word "hopeless" into something affectionate, and a little Whitmanian, in "hopeless at football." In his insightful review of *The Happy Man* for *Poetry*, David Shapiro refers to Hall's "elegy to the world without marvels" and "poetics of imperfection." These phrases aptly characterize the child in this poem when she visits the place her father rents when the family breaks up: "She whirled among cheap furniture,/over bare linoleum, saying, '*Cozy, cozy . . .*'" The poem itself is

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neither cozy nor hopeless, but able to include both terms.

Such description, and quotation from a long poem, may suggest a monochromatic, somber book. In fact, the judges were attracted by the variety of poetry and life Hall finds within his subject. Here is all of a short poem, one that stacks its phrases and clauses into free-verse lines with an imitative comic ebullience:

Couplet
Old Timer's Day, Fenway Park, 1 May 1982

When the tall puffy
figure wearing number
nine starts
late for the fly ball,
laboring forward
like a lame truckhorse
startled by a gartersnake,
—this old fellow
whose body we remember
as sleek and nervous
as a filly's—

and barely catches it
in his glove's
tip, we rise
and applaud weeping:
On a green field
we observe the ruin
of even the bravest
body, as Odysseus
wept to glimpse
among shades the shadow
of Achilles.

The comic but respectful attitude is deftly sketched by poetry's formal joke on itself, the Ogden Nash prolongation of syntax and rhyme. It is a formal means played against the classical restraint of "we observe the ruin," the resurrection of "brave" in its old original sense of "splendid" as well as "courageous." This formal holding back while piling up generates a feeling like the significant absence of the word "Heroic" before "Couplet" in the title. In some other work, Ted Williams might be heroic; in this one, not even Achilles necessarily is. In an emotion more familiar and available than tragedy, the spectators applaud as well as weep; they are feeling a sad truth, and having a good time.

In some ways the most impressively lyrical section of this richly textured book is the concluding section, "Sisters," which takes for its keynote the word "repose." In the poem "A Sister on the Tracks" a woman walking along the rail-

A SISTER ON THE TRACKS

Between pond and sheepbarn, by maples and watery birches,
Rebecca paces a double line of rust
in a sandy trench, striding on black
creosoted eight-by-eights.
In nineteen-forty-three,
wartrains skidded tanks,
airframes, dynamos, searchlights, and troops
to Montreal. She counted cars
from the stopped hayrack at the endless crossing:
ninety-nine, one-hundred . . . and her grandfather Ben's
voice shaking with rage and oratory told
how the mighty Boston and Maine
kept the Statehouse in its pocket.
Today Rebecca walks
a line that vanishes, in solitude
bypassed by wars and commerce. She remembers the story
of the bunting'd day her great-great-great-
grandmother watched the first train roll and smoke
from Potter Place to Gale
with fireworks, cider, and speeches. Then the long rail
drove west, buzzing and humming; the hive of rolling stock
extended a thousand-car'd perspective
from Ohio to Oregon, where men who left stone farms
rode rails toward gold.
On this blue day she walks
under a high jet's glint of swooped aluminum pulling
its feathery contrail westward. She sees ahead
how the jet dies into junk, and highway wastes
like railroad. Beside her the old creation retires,
hayrack sunk like a rowboat
under its fields of hay. She closes her eyes
to glimpse the vertical track that rises
from the underworld of graves,
soul's ascension connecting dead to unborn, rails
that hum with a hymn of continual vanishing
where tracks cross.
For she opens her eyes to read
on a solitary gravestone next to the rails
the familiar names of Ruth and Matthew Bott, born
in a Norfolk parish, who ventured
the immigrant's passionate Exodus westward to labor
on their own land. Here love builds
its mortal house, where today's wind carries
a double scent of heaven and cut hay.

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"Now I will abandon the route of my life
as my shadowy wives abandon me, taking my children.
I will stop somewhere. I will park in a summer street
where the days tick like metal in the stillness.
I will rent the room over Bert's Modern Barbershop
where the TO LET sign leans in the plateglass window;
or I will buy the brown BUNGALOW FOR SALE.

"I will work forty hours a week clerking at the paintstore.
On Fridays I will cash my paycheck at Six Rivers Bank
and stop at Harvey's Market and talk with Harvey.
Walking on Maple Street I will speak to everyone.
At basketball games I will cheer for my neighbors' sons.
I will watch my neighbors' daughters grow up, marry,
raise children. The joints of my fingers will stiffen.

"There will be no room inside me for other places.
I will attend funerals regularly and weddings.
I will chat with the mailman when he comes on Saturdays.
I will shake my head when I hear of the florist
who drops dead in the greenhouse over a flat of pansies;
I spoke with her only yesterday . . .
When lawyer elopes with babysitter I will shake my head.

"When Harvey's boy enlists in the Navy
I will wave goodbye at the Trailways Depot with the others.
I will vote Democratic; I will vote Republican.
I will applaud the valedictorian at graduation
and wish her well as she goes away to the university
and weep as she goes away. I will live in a steady joy;
I will exult in the ecstasy of my concealment."

From *The Happy Man* (Random House) © 1986 by Donald Hall.

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road tracks has a nearly mystical vision of past and future linked by the ladder-like steel rails and ties, endings and beginnings on the same unbroken line, resolved by a recurrence of the image of life as a house: "Here love builds/its mortal house, where today's wind carries/a double scent of heaven and cut hay." In "A Sister by the Pond" the same character has a vision that seems more transcendent, wanting her soul to "withdraw as a fish into water . . . or into weeds that waver in water." This finality or transcendence is balanced by the concluding poem of the book, and *The Happy Man*'s final lines, which return faithfully to the volume's chosen source, the miraculously inexhaustible source of the quotidian:

I offer this cup to you:
Though we drink
from this cup every day, we will
never drink it dry.

ROBERT PINSKY

FILMS.

VITO RUSSO

Maurice

In *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen says, "You always try to get things to come out perfect in art because it's so difficult in life." Like the E.M. Forster novel upon which it is based, James Ivory's lushly beautiful film version of *Maurice* (pronounced any way you like) is the perfect fantasy of wish fulfillment. The first film to tell a gay love story in a casual, unselfconscious way, it gives a sympathetic audience exactly what it wants: it demystifies homosexual love by establishing the universality of desire. It is also the first widely respected film to suggest that homosexuality ought not be a controversial issue.

Gay characters have worked best on the screen when filmmakers have had the rare courage to make no big deal out of them, when they have been implicitly gay in a film which is not about homosexuality. Cher's Dolly Pelliker in Mike Nichols's *Silkwood* and Buck Henry's lawyer in Nicolas Roeg's *The Man Who Fell to Earth* were incidentally gay.

Maurice goes one step further. It is a film about homophobia, repression and personal courage that takes the sexuality of its characters for granted, even though it depicts a world in which people do not. This is no small accomplishment. It's as radical an approach now as it was in 1914 when Forster wrote his novel. This work, not published until 1971, a year after the author's death, exposes the secret yearnings of a man determined to express his nature in spite of the considerable taboos against homosexual behavior in Edwardian England.

What is astonishing is how little has changed since, how applicable Maurice's painfully slow coming-out story still is to the plight of lesbians and gay men in modern America. Of course, the legal status of homosexuals has improved since Forster quietly put his novel into a locked drawer, but the hysteria surrounding the Oscar Wilde trials in England is duplicated today in the backlash against homosexuals unleashed by the AIDS crisis. What makes *Maurice* genuinely daring is its suggestion that coming out of the closet is a sign of maturity, not a manifestation of reckless and dangerous adolescent behavior. The film presents, at long last, the kinds of hell gay people have experienced for generations in their solitary search for a truce with the world. It is the first film to touch upon the truth that homosexuality is not a matter of choice—that one is gay in the same way one is short or blond or heterosexual. This, apparently, is still big news to most people.

Maurice is as much about the rules of a class-conscious society as it is about that society's schizophrenic response to the expression of sexuality. Now, as then, discretion is the better part of wisdom. Homosexuality is tolerated in the artistic areas of big cities by people who have the good breeding and sophistication to look the other way as long as certain rules are observed. One of the biggest social gaffes gays can make is to call attention to their life style. (When producer John Glines thanked his lover at the Tony Awards, John J. O'Connor of *The New York Times* called the speech "tasteless.") Maurice's platonic two-year affair with his Cambridge buddy Clive Durham comes to a bad end because even privileged people like Maurice and Clive cannot make a political issue of their sexuality if they wish to retain their privileges. It is not enough, says *Maurice*, to hide one's condition. One must also construct an acceptable

Vito Russo is the author of the recently published, updated version of The Celluloid Closet *(Harper & Row).*

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facade as protection against persecution. I refer anyone who thinks this situation has changed to columnist Liz Smith's effusive reporting of Michael Bennett's marriage to Donna McKechnie.

When Risley, a Cambridge contemporary of Maurice and Clive loosely based on Lytton Strachey, is entrapped by the police and jailed for "corrupting a member of the lower classes," his crime is his vulnerability and lack of discretion as much as his homosexuality. We are meant to view Risley's stupidity in allowing himself to be put in such a compromising position in the same way as we respond to the adultery of Gary Hart. Since homosexuality, like adultery, is seen as something one *does* instead of something one *is*, flaunting it becomes the real crime.

Clive is profoundly shaken by Risley's downfall. He takes society's message to heart, ends his relationship with Maurice and buries his feelings in a marriage of convenience. Maurice, on the other hand, defiantly initiates an affair with a lower-class gamekeeper named Scudder who introduces him to the physical side of his emotions. Maurice is willing to forsake his family, friends, social status and career in pursuit of the happy ending ironically denied Clive Durham. For gay people, at least, the final scene provides one of the most painfully nostalgic moments in recent cinema. Clive bids farewell to the life he can never know and turns stoically to home and hearth as a happy Maurice waves goodbye in the distance. If this had been a Hollywood film instead of an independent one, an observer remarked, it would have ended with Durham's wife whispering softly, "You're still in love with him, aren't you?"

This is all very nice. With *Maurice*, we have finally succeeded in re-creating the classic cinematic romance melodrama in homosexual terms. It's a coffee-table movie with a Hollywood ending for arthouse audiences. The wildly enthusiastic reception it has received encourages us to believe that things have changed much more than is the case. At the film's premiere a member of the audience was overheard to ask, "Does this mean it's O.K. to be gay now?" Not if the entire body of mainstream film is any indication, it isn't. *Maurice* exposes the homophobia that most films still support.

In popular films, an antigay bias may be more evident now than at any other time in our history. Never have Hollywood screenwriters felt so secure in their belief that it is socially acceptable to insult homosexuals. The use of the word "faggot" has become almost mandatory. Slurs that would never be tolerated in reference to any other group of people are commonly used onscreen against homosexuals. Unlike racist remarks, which are almost always put into the mouths of villains and bigots, antigay comments are most frequently given to the characters with whom the audience is supposed to identify. In the last five years, fully half of the films directed at the youth market have been unconscionably homophobic.

In *Teen Wolf*, Michael J. Fox confides to his best friend that he has a confession to make. "You're not gonna tell me you're a faggot, are you?" asks the friend nervously. "No," replies Fox, "I'm a werewolf." His friend is greatly relieved.

In *Night Shift*, Henry Winkler ends up in prison and mutters to himself, "Well, I guess I can't sink any lower than this." He then notices an effeminate homosexual inmate and says, "On second thought, I guess I could."

In *No Way Out* a character responds to the information that someone is gay by saying, "Well, I'll be damned." Another character comments, "If the Bible is right, so will he." The audience at my screening roared with approval.

Virtually all of the brat pack films contain gay stereotypes, as do most popular comedies. Joel Schumacher's *St. Elmo's Fire* features a gay man whose sole function is to illustrate how queer everyone else in the movie isn't. Robert Townsend's recent *Hollywood Shuffle*, a film meant to attack negative stereotyping of blacks in Hollywood films, is particularly offensive. Townsend complains that in order for blacks to make it onscreen they must shuffle. He then creates gay characters who are hairdressers and wardrobe queens, terming them "fags."

Few people seem to think these attitudes are any big deal, even though they have serious repercussions. Increased gay visibility has threatened the central nervous system of American life. In the same season in which *Parting Glances*, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Desert Hearts* and *Doña Herlinda and Her Son* opened in New York, *20/20* did a segment on the increase in gay-bashing across the country. As Stanley Kaufmann of *The New Republic* wrote: "Suppose that in these days of the smash success of *The Color Purple*, *20/20* had shown a segment about the tarring and feathering of

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blacks, about black lynchings. One's sense of reality would be at risk. For a moment after the TV homosexual segment I almost felt I had to check the calendar."

As a group, gays and lesbians have few natural allies and continue to occupy a low priority on the left's agenda. Most liberal intellectuals probably still agree with Jeff Greenfield's statement in 1978 that homosexuals who wanted the right to be open about their sexuality were taking the left away from "the business . . . of social justice." When David Denby, reviewing *Maurice* in *New York* says, "no one in his right mind now thinks homosexuals are better off denying themselves," he's being gracious and politically militant. His comment is as much a wish fulfillment as is the ending of the film itself. Richard Schickel's reaction to *Making Love* in *Time* magazine is more typical. Observing that movies, like the rest of society, are just beginning to move beyond the notion that homosexuality is an illness, he adds, "Some people will never make that leap . . . or abandon their *understandable* concern that gay love affairs depicted by role model movie stars may have a baneful influence on the impressionable young." [Emphasis added.]

In a letter to Eldridge Cleaver in *Soul on Ice*, Beverly Axelrod says, "Our tragedy in America is not derived from our fantasy of what homosexuals are but from our fantasy of what America is—we have made each other up." All of us, gay and straight, have a dual attitude toward the movies. They are made primarily to feed our fantasies, and yet we look to them to show us ourselves. *Maurice* is rare because it is one of the few films in which a gay hero is tortured not by his homosexuality but by an intolerant society. It is a dangerous game to judge the success or failure of a film by how many people it reaches and persuades of its philosophy. Yet in this case it comes with the territory. There is a built-in dilemma which gay people and other minority groups face in all popular arts. On the one hand, mainstream theatrical releases and made-for-television movies like *Making Love* and *An Early Frost* are put together by committee in order to reach the widest possible audience without offending anyone. Reaching a mass audience with a radical message doesn't seem possible. On the other hand, *Maurice* is a chic, pretentious, politically astute independent film which preaches almost exclusively to the converted. Nobody learns anything new and nobody wins.

Quentin Crisp once said that homosexuality would never be accepted until it was seen as completely boring—a mundane, inconsequential part of everyday life. *Maurice* is a small step in this direction because its hero is quite ordinary despite his crusade. Successful independent films featuring gays, alas, are the exception rather than the rule. If we really want to make homosexual characters boring we have to get them on network television. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 470*)
students applied to the college, a limit was set, though it proved to be flexible." My review has one sentence on the topic: "There was a quota for Jews until the late 1940s." Other than Harris's cheerful "flexible," the sentences are essentially the same. Harris, by the way, to judge from her book, apparently believes that the Jews are a "race."

§ Albers and his followers consistently voted against integration, despite the student and faculty majority. Duberman has some thirty pages on the question for those who wish to go into this; Harris has only a few paragraphs. By "decision to segregate" I assume Harris means "integrate." Nevertheless, Black Mountain was never integrated; for a few years it accepted one or two black students.

Both Harris and I were born too late to enroll at Black Mountain. She imagines the school as a paradise; I imagine it as Robert Rauschenberg described Albers, both beautiful and impossible. No doubt both of us would have attended, and I would have been expelled. *Eliot Weinberger*

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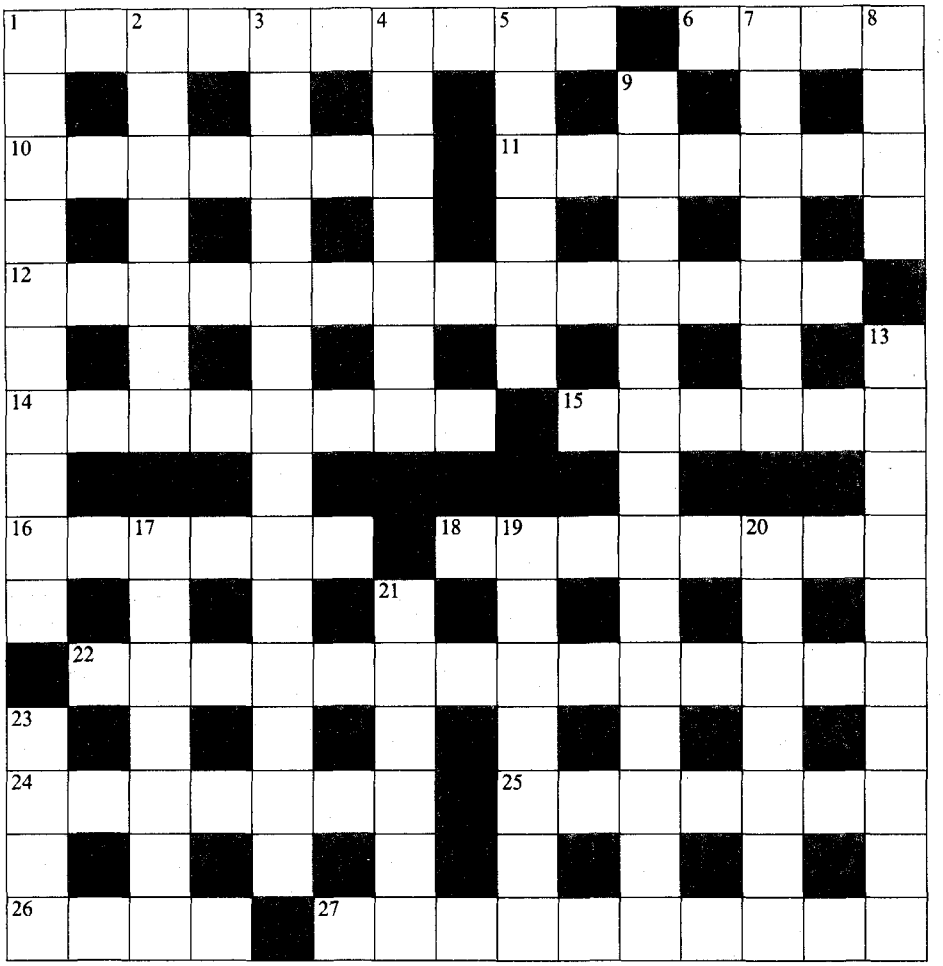
Crossword Puzzle No. 2170

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 6 One might while preparing to drive to see what the President could do at the inaugural evening celebration. (7,3,4)
10 A group of students—just less than a hundred—show one of those things that scholars study. (7)
11 With an echo, ice, snow sometimes show what you have to decide to make. (7)
12 It implies excessive carefulness about minute details, so clues suit men differently. (14)
14 Such a decision might be very important for future actions, which is damn bad in a carefree adventure. (8)
15 Sounds like what Shelley gave a skylark, which might be past due. (4,2)
16 Possibly sends a message by taxi to the French. (6)
18 Certainly not sent up the river on false evidence, if you get such a picture. (8)
22 How might you term one of them? Happy? Or any one of a half-dozen other appellations? (3,5,6)
24 An old armorbearer with a fighter plane in the rear rather smashed up. (7)
25 The sources of the name of what Jenner gave us is rather bossy. (7)
26 and 27 Fast asleep, and evidently everyone seems to think something isn't quick. (4,2, 3,5)

DOWN

1 You might find this place comic, but one doesn't help with anything good. (10)
2 Michael, the old 23 down, has an old cart carrying a lot of weight. (7)
3 Implying simple use of the in-and-out door—with no saving quality. (4,4,4,2)
4 Lay, perhaps, a second beginning with a titular ending. (7)
5 In old Rome this drinking vessel causes a quick involuntary inspiration. (6)
7 A small measure of capacity, not new, charged with being this. (7)
8 Certainly not the first to exist for a long time. (4)
9 A question of method at present addressed to the well-tanned boss, which is something the would-be speaker practices. (3,3,5,3)
13 What the submarine commander might do and then go down? (One might stoop to do such.) (10)
17 Sherlock worked on a scandal here. (7)
19 The old city has a baseball team at a European day of rejoicing in the capital of Hawaii. (7)
20 Somewhat more like Robin's men, reputedly. (7)
21 Where to find "re" on the ascending scale, to exaggerate somewhat. (6)
23 Proving the poet's get-up is dull, to say the least. (4)

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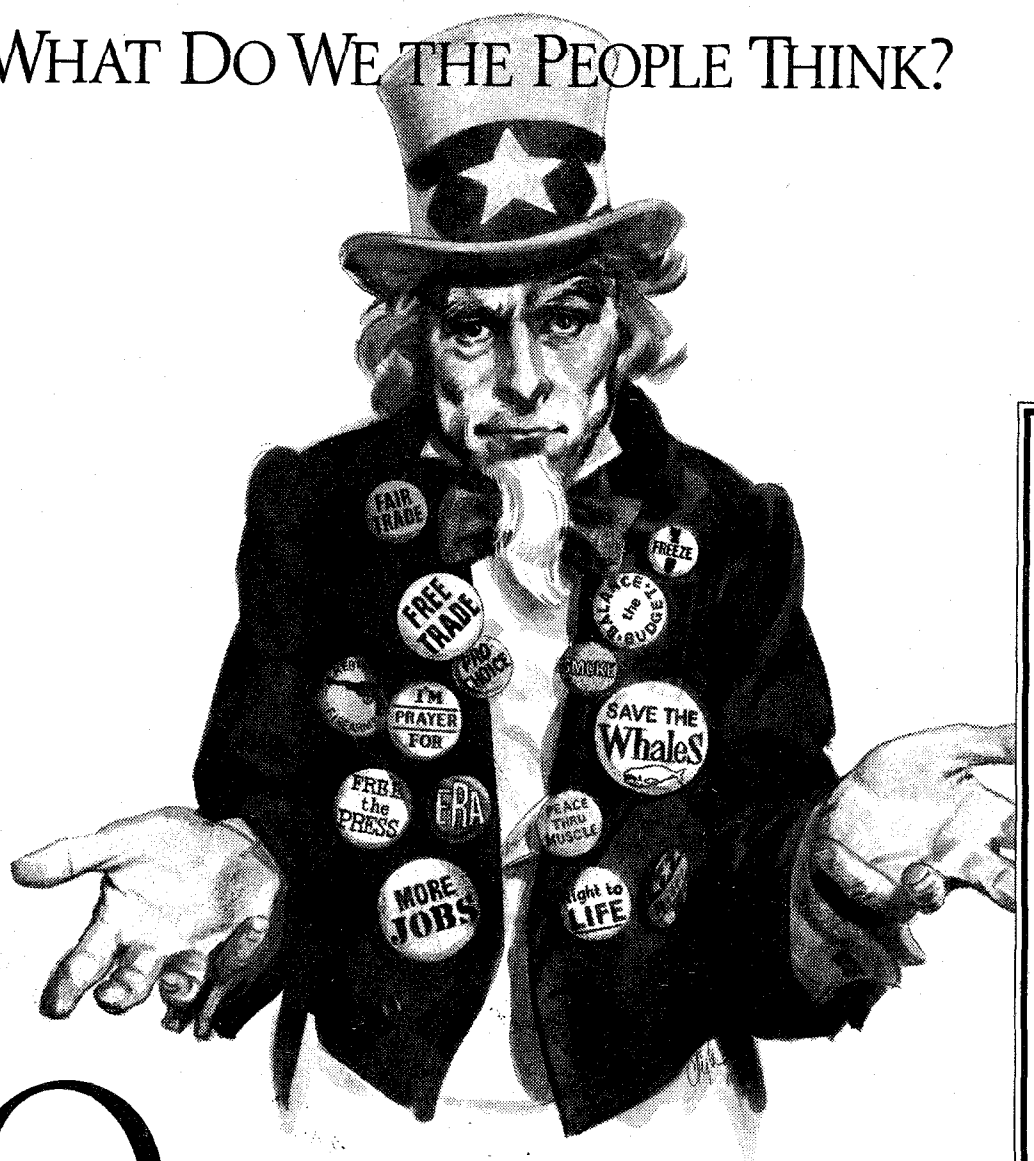

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